

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE LIVING & THE DEAD

DR. RUDOLF STEINER

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1.The Ego-consciousness of the So-called Dead

Let us first send our thoughts to those who are outside on the battlefields, where the great events of the present are taking place, to those who must stand for these serious events with their life, body and soul:

Spirits of their Souls, working Guardians!
May your pinions bring
Our souls' beseeching love
To the human beings on this earth, entrusted to your care,
That, united with your might,
Our prayer may helpfully ray out
To the souls whom it lovingly seeks!

And let us remember those who have already passed through the portal of death, as a result of these events:

Spirits of their Souls, working Guardians!
May your pinions bring
Our souls' beseeching love
To the human beings of the spheres, entrusted to your care,
That, united with your might,

Our prayer may helpfully ray out
To the souls whom it lovingly seeks!

And the Spirit Whom we seek through our spiritual-scientific endeavours, the Spirit Who passed through the Mystery of Golgotha for the welfare of the earth and for mankind's freedom and progress, may *He* be with you and with your difficult tasks!

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The time in which we live, reminds us daily and hourly of death, this significant event in human life, it reminds us of man's passage through the portal of death. For only in the light of spiritual science, death becomes a real event, in the true meaning of the word, because spiritual science shows us the eternal forces that are active within us, that pass through births and deaths and take on a special form of existence between birth and death, in order to assume another form of existence after their passage through the portal of death. In the light of spiritual science, death becomes an *event*, instead of being merely the abstract end of life (only a materialistic world-conception can look upon death as the end of life), it becomes a deep and serious event within the whole compass of human life. Even from our own ranks, dear

friends of ours have left us in order to pass through the portal of death, chiefly as a result of the present historical events, but also for other reasons, and so it may perhaps be particularly appropriate just now to say a few things on death, on this great event, and on the facts of human life that are connected with it.

Explanations have often been given in our spiritual-scientific lectures on the life between death and a new birth, so that we were able to gain many essential facts, particularly in regard to this subject. The course which spiritual science has followed up to now, will have shown you that in every single case it can only speak of things from one definite standpoint, so that a more accurate knowledge can gradually be acquired by speaking of things repeatedly and throwing light upon them from many points of view. To-day I shall therefore add to the facts that you already know in connection with this subject, a few things that may be useful to our comprehension of the world as a whole.

Through spiritual science, we consider, to begin with (and that is a good thing) the human being such as he stands before us, here, in the physical world as an expression of his whole being. We must depart first of all from the manner in which the human being presents himself to us in the physical world, and for

this reason, I have frequently pointed out that we obtain, as it were, a general view of man's whole being if we contemplate him so that we first take, as a foundation, his physical body, which we learn to know externally in the physical world through our senses and the scientific-dissection of what we perceive through the senses. We then proceed, by studying that form of organisation which we designate as our etheric body: this already possesses a super-sensible character and cannot, therefore, be contemplated with the aid of the ordinary intellect, which is bound to the brain, and is consequently also inaccessible to our ordinary science. The etheric body is an organism having super-sensible character, concerning which we may say that it was already known to men such as Immanuel Hermann Fichte, son of the great thinker Johann Gottlieb Fichte, to Troxler and others. Indeed, man's etheric body can only be grasped through imaginative knowledge owing to its super-sensible character, but as far as imaginative knowledge is concerned, it can be contemplated externally, just as the physical-sensory body can be contemplated externally through our ordinary sensory knowledge.

We then ascend in our contemplation to the astral body. The astral body in man cannot be contemplated in an external-sensory manner, in the same way in

which we contemplate the physical body through our external senses, or in the same way in which we contemplate our etheric body through our inner sense; the astral body is something that can only be experienced inwardly. We must experience it inwardly and in order to experience it, we must be within it. The same thing applies to the fourth member which must be grasped in the physical world, to the Ego. With these four members of human nature, we build up our whole being.

Past lectures showed us that what we designate as man's physical body is a very complicated structure, formed during long periods of development that passed through the stages of Saturn, the Sun and the Moon [See Rudolf Steiner's 'AN OUTLINE OF OCCULT SCIENCE.']; also the evolution of the earth contributed to this development of the physical body, from the very beginning of earthly existence up to our time. A complicated process of development therefore built up our physical body.

That form of contemplation which is, to begin with, accessible to us in the physical world, merely sees the external aspect of everything that lives within the physical body. Even ordinary science merely sees this external aspect. We might say: Our ordinary physical

contemplation and ordinary science, in the form in which it now lives in the world, merely know of the physical body as much as we would know of a house, if we would only go round it outside, without ever going inside, so that we would never learn to know what it is like inside, nor what people live in it.

Of course, those who stand upon the foundation of ordinary science, in the usual materialistic meaning, will argue: “We are thoroughly acquainted with the interior of the physical body! We know what it is like, because we have frequently studied the brain inside the skull, when dissecting corpses; we have frequently studied the stomach and the heart.” This interior, however, that can thus be studied from outside, this spatial interior is not what I mean when I speak of man’s inner being. Even this spatial interior is nothing but an external thing. Indeed, in the case of the physical body, this spatial interior is far more external than the real spatial exterior.

This must sound strange. But our sense-organs — you know this from other descriptions contained in our spiritual science — were formed already during the Saturn period and we carry them on the surface of our body. Spatially speaking, they are outside. Nevertheless, they were built by forces that are far

more spiritual than those that formed our stomach, or everything that exists, spatially speaking, inside our body. What is inside our body, is built up by the least spiritual of forces. Strange though it may sound, I must nevertheless point out that we really speak of ourselves in an entirely mistaken manner — upside down, we might say. Since we live on the physical plane, it is natural to speak in that way; nevertheless the way in which we speak of ourselves is quite wrong. We should really designate the skin of our face as our interior, and the stomach as our exterior. This would lead us far closer to the truth! It would lead us closer to the real truth if we were to say: We eat in such a way that we send the food out of us; when we send food into our stomach, we really send it out, we do not send it into our body, as we generally say at the present time. The more our organs lie on the surface, the more spiritual are the forces from which they come; and the more they lie inside our body, the less spiritual are the forces that gave rise to them,

The descriptions that were given so far in our spiritual science enable you to grasp this with a certain ease. If you carefully remember the descriptions of spiritual science, you will no doubt remember what it says in regard to the Moon stage of development, namely, that something split off during

the Moon stage of development, and that something also split off during the Earth-development; it went out into the world's spaces from the Saturn, Sun and Moon stages of development. A very strange thing is connected with this splitting-off process: namely, we were turned inside out! Our inside became our outside, and our outside became our inside. During the Saturn and Sun periods, our human countenance, that is now turned towards the outer world, was really turned towards our inner being. Of course, this was only the case during the early stages of development; but even during a part of the Moon period, during the Moon existence, the foundation of the inner organs which we now possess was still formed from outside. Since that time, we have really been turned inside out, like an overcoat that can be turned. We should bear in mind that many super-sensible facts are connected with our physical body; its whole structure is super-sensible; the super-sensible world has formed it, and when we look upon the physical body as a whole, it merely shows us its external aspect,

If we now come to the etheric body, we shall find that it is neither visible nor accessible to the physical-sensory contemplation. But when the human being passes through the portal of death, it becomes all the more important. The time through which the human

being now passes, the first days after his death, are particularly important as far as the etheric body is concerned. But we must learn to think differently, even in regard to the physical body, if we wish to grasp in the right way all that we encounter after our passage through the portal of death.

You already know (for you can observe this even in the physical world) that when we pass through the portal of death, we lay aside our physical body, as we generally say. We lay aside our physical body. Through decomposition or cremation (the only difference between these two processes lies in the length of time that they take up) the physical body is handed over to the elements of the earth. Now we might think that the physical body simply ceases to exist for those who have passed through the portal of death. But this is not the case, in this meaning. For we can hand over to the earth only those parts of our physical body that come from the earth itself. We cannot, however, hand over to the earth that part of our physical body that comes from the ancient Moon existence, nor that part which comes from the ancient Sun existence, or from the ancient Saturn existence. For those parts that come from the ancient Saturn existence, from the Sun existence, from the Moon existence, and even from a great portion of the Earth existence, are super-sensible

forces. These super-sensible forces contained in our physical body, of which only the external part is accessible to our sensory contemplation, as explained just now, — where do these super-sensible forces go to, after we have passed through the portal of death? As stated, we hand over to the earth, we return to the earth, only that part of our physical body, of that most wonderful structure which exists in the world, to begin with, as a form, — we return to the earth only what the earth itself has given to the physical body. And where is the other part, when we have passed through the portal of death? The other part withdraws from the one that sinks down into the earth, as it were, through the process of decomposition or cremation; the other part is taken up by the whole universe.

If you now think of everything you can at all imagine in the environment of the earth, including the planets and the fixed stars, if you imagine this in the most spiritual form, this spiritually conceived idea would give you the place where the spiritual part of our physical body abides after death. Only a portion of this spiritual part, a portion contained in the element of heat, separates and remains with the earth. But every other spiritual part of our physical body is borne out into the spaces of the universe, into the whole cosmos.

Where do we go to, when we abandon our physical body? Where do we dive down? Through our death, we dive down with lightning speed into that which forms our physical body, from out [of] all the super-sensible forces. Imagine that all the constructive forces that have worked upon your physical body, ever since the time of Saturn, were to stretch themselves into infinity, in order to prepare the place in which you live between death and a new birth. Between birth and death, all this is drawn together, I might say, within the space enclosed by your skin; it is merely drawn together.

When we are outside our physical body, we experience something that is of utmost importance for the whole subsequent life between death and a new birth. I have often mentioned this. This experience is of opposite character to the corresponding experience during our life here, upon the physical plane. During our life upon the physical plane, we cannot look back as far as the hour of our birth; we cannot look back upon it with the aid of our ordinary cognitive power. There is not one person who can remember his own birth, nor look back upon it. The only thing we know, is that we were born; in the first place, because we have been told so by others, and in the second place, because all the other human beings that came to the

earth after us, were also born, so that we infer from this that we too, were born. But we cannot pass through the real experience of our own birth.

Exactly the opposite is the case with the corresponding experience after death. Whereas, during our physical life, the immediate contemplation of our birth can never rise up before our soul, the moment of death stands before our soul throughout our life between death and a new birth, if we only look upon it spiritually. We must realise that we then look upon the moment of death from the other side. Here, on earth, death has a terrifying aspect only because we look upon it as a kind of dissolution, as an end. But when we look back upon the moment of death from the other side, from the spiritual side, then death continually appears to us as a victory of the spirit, as the spirit that is extricating itself from the physical. It then appears as the greatest, most beautiful and significant event. Moreover, this experience kindles that which constitutes our Ego-consciousness after death. Throughout the time between death and a new birth, we have an Ego-consciousness that not only resembles but far exceeds that which we have here, during our physical life. We would not have this Ego-consciousness, if we could not look back incessantly, if we would not always see — but from the other side,

from the spiritual side — that moment in which our spiritual part extricated itself from the physical. We know that we are an Ego only because we know that we have died, that our spiritual has freed itself from our physical part. When we cannot contemplate the moment of death, beyond the portal of death, then our Ego-consciousness after death is in the same case as our physical Ego-consciousness here upon the earth, when we are asleep. Just as we know nothing of our physical Ego-consciousness when we are asleep, so we know nothing concerning ourselves after death, if we do not constantly have before us the moment of death. It stands before us as one of the most beautiful and loftiest moments.

You see, even in this case we must set about thinking in an entirely different way of the spiritual world, than of the sensory-physical world. If we indolently remain by the thoughts which we have in connection with the physical-sensory world, it will be impossible for us to grasp the spiritual in any way more precisely. For the most important thing after death is that the moment of death is viewed from the other side. This kindles our Ego-consciousness on the other side. Here, in the physical world, we have, as it were, one side of Ego-consciousness; after death, we have the other side of Ego-consciousness. I explained

just now where we should look for the super-sensible part of our physical body after death. We should seek this physical body in the shape of a relation of forces, of an organism of forces, as a cosmos of forces, within the whole world. This physical essence prepares the place through which we must pass between death and a new birth.

Within our physical body, which is so small in comparison to the whole world, our skin really encloses a microcosm, something that is, in reality, a whole world. Trivially speaking, I might say that this world is merely rolled together and that afterwards it unrolls again and fills out the universe, with the exception of one tiny space, that always remains empty.

Between death and a new birth, we really exist everywhere in the world; we live in it with that part which, here on earth, lies at the foundation of our physical body in the form of super-sensible forces. We are everywhere, except in that one place. This remains empty. It is the space enclosed by our skin, the space which we take up in the physical world. This remains empty.

Yet we constantly look upon this empty space. That is to say, we look upon our own self, from outside; we look into a concavity. This remains empty. It remains empty to such an extent that a fundamental feeling rises up in connection with it. Namely, we do not contemplate things in an abstract manner, we do not simply stare at them, but our contemplation is connected with a powerful inner life-experience, with a mighty experience. It is connected with the fact that when we contemplate this emptiness, a feeling rises up in us, a feeling that accompanies us throughout our life between death and a new birth and constitutes a great deal of what we generally designate as our life beyond. It is the feeling, that there is something in the world which must again and again be filled out by us. And then we acquire the feeling: "I exist in the world for a definite purpose, which I, alone, can fulfil." Thus we learn to know our place within the world. We feel that we are building stones, without which the world could not exist. This is what arises through the contemplation of that empty space. When we gaze at it, we are overcome by a feeling telling us that we stand within the world as something that forms part of it.

All this is connected with the further development of our physical body. The more elementary forms of

description only enable us to explain schematically as it were, a reality of the spiritual world that really requires to be explained in the form of images. In order to rise gradually to those concepts which penetrate more deeply into the reality of the spiritual world, we must first have those images.

We know that our next experience is a kind of retrospective memory, that lasts for days. But this retrospective memory is inappropriately designated (but nevertheless with a certain right) as a retrospective memory, for we have before us now, for a few days, something that resembles a tableau, or a panorama, woven out of all we have experienced during our past life. It does not, however, rise up in the same way in which an ordinary memory rises up in our physical body. You see, the memories that live in our physical body are of such a kind that we draw them out of our memory. Memory is a force that is connected with our physical body. Our recollections rise up in the form of thoughts; through the power of memory, we draw them out successively, within the stream of time. But the retrospective memory after death is of such a kind that everything that occurred during our earthly life, now surrounds us simultaneously, as if it were a panorama. Our life-experiences now rise up in the form of imaginations. We can only say that we now

live, for whole days, within our experiences. What we experienced just before death, and what we experienced during our childhood, stands before us simultaneously, in powerful pictures. A panorama of our life, a life-picture stands before us and it reveals, simultaneously, in a woof woven out of the ether, what normally occurs successively, within the stream of time. Everything that we now see before us, lives in the ether.

We feel, above all, that we are now surrounded by something that is alive. Everything within it lives and weaves. And then we experience that it resounds spiritually, that it shines forth spiritually and gives warmth spiritually.

We know that this life-tableau disappears after a few days. What makes it cease and what is the essence of this life-tableau?

If we study the true essence of this life-tableau, we must really say: Everything that we have experienced during our life, is woven into it. How did we experience these things? — In the form of thoughts, connected with our experiences. Everything that we experienced in the form of thoughts and concepts is contained in this picture of our life.

In order to grasp this concretely, let us now say: During our earthly life, we lived together with another human being, we spoke with him and in speaking with him, his thoughts communicated with our thoughts. We received love from him, we allowed his soul to influence us and experienced all this inwardly. In this manner, we shared the experiences of the person we lived with. He lived and we lived, and through him we experienced something. What we experienced through him, now appears to us woven into this etheric life-tableau. It is the same thing that constitutes our memories. Think, for instance, of the moment, ten or twenty years ago, when you first met him and experienced something through him. Imagine that this memory now rises up before you, but that you do not remember it in the same way in which you would remember things during your ordinary life. The ordinary memories are grey and faded, but now you remember things in such a way that they rise up within you as LIVING memories; you see your friend standing before you in exactly the same way in which he stood before you during the real experience.

Here, on earth, we are often very dreamy and what we experience upon the physical plane in a living and hearty manner, becomes dulled and loses its vitality. But when we pass through the portal of death, when

our experiences rise up before us in the life-tableau, they are no longer dull and lifeless, but exist there, in the original freshness and vitality which they possessed when we passed through them, during our earthly life. In this form they become inwoven with our life-tableau; in this form we experience them after death, for whole days.

In regard to the physical world, we have the impression that our physical body falls away from us when we die; in a similar way we now have the impression that also our etheric body falls away from us after a certain number of days, but it does not fall away from us in the same way in which our physical body falls away, for it becomes inwoven with the whole universe, with the whole world. It lives in the world and stamps its impressions upon the whole world, while we are experiencing our life-tableau. What we thus have before us in the form of a life-tableau, has now been handed over to the external world: it lives in our surroundings and has been taken over by the world.

During those days, we have an important and impressive experience in this connection. For, after death, our experiences do not merely resemble the memories which we have during our earthly life, but

they are in every way substance for new experiences. Even the manner in which we grasp our Ego, through the fact that we constantly look back upon our death, is a *new* experience, for our earthly senses do not enable us to experience anything similar. This can only be grasped through the knowledge of initiation. But even what we experience during the days in which we are surrounded by this life-tableau, by this etheric life that frees itself from us and becomes inwoven with the universe, even what we experience in this manner, is impressive and lofty, it is an overwhelming and powerful experience for the human soul.

You see, during our physical life on earth, we face the world: we face the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdom. It enables us to experience what our senses are able to experience, what our intellect, that is bound to the brain, obtains through the sense-experiences, what are our feelings, that are connected with our vascular system, experience: we experience all these things, here on earth.

But in reality, and from a loftier standpoint, we human beings are extremely great dunces (excuse this expression!), gigantic dunces between birth and death. In regard to the wisdom of the great world, we are fearfully stupid if we believe that here on earth,

when we experience something in the manner described and bear it along in the form of memories, everything is finished; we are fearfully stupid if we think that our experiences are finished, when we take them up in this manner, as human beings. For while we experience things, while we form concepts and feelings rise up in our experiences, the whole world of the Hierarchies is active within this process through which we acquire our experiences; the Hierarchies live and weave in it.

When we face a human being and, look into his eyes, then the Spirits of the Hierarchies, the Hierarchies themselves, the work of the Hierarchies, live in our gaze and in what is sent towards us through the gaze of the other human being. Our experience merely shows us the external aspect of things, for, in reality, the Gods work within our experiences. We think, that we only live for our own sake; yet the Gods work out something through our experiences; they obtain from them something that they can weave into the world. We form ideas, we have feeling experiences; the Gods take them up and communicate them to their world. And when we die, we know that the purpose of our life is to give the Gods the opportunity to spin out of our life this woof coming from our etheric body and to hand it over to the whole

universe. The Gods gave us the chance to live, in order that they might spin out something for themselves, thus enriching the world.

This is an overwhelming thought. Every one of our strides is the external expression of an event connected with the Gods; it forms part of that woof which the Gods use for their plan of the world and which they leave to us only until we pass through the portal of death. After our death, they take it away from us and incorporate with the universe these, our human destinies. Our human destinies are, at the same time, the deeds of Gods, and the form in which they appear to us human beings is merely their outward aspect. This is the significant, important and essential fact which we should bear in mind.

What we acquire inwardly, during our earthly life, through the fact that we can think and have feelings, whom does this belong to, after our death? Whom does it now belong to? After our death, it belongs to the universe. We look back upon our death, and in the same way we now look back with that part which remains to us, namely, with our astral body and our Ego, upon that which has become inwoven with the universe, with the world. During our earthly life, we bear *within* us what thus becomes inwoven with the

universe after our death; we bear it within us, as our etheric body. But now it is spun up and becomes inwoven with the world. And we now look upon it, we contemplate it. After our death, we look upon it in the same way in which we experienced it inwardly, here on earth. It now lives in the world outside. Just as here on earth we see stars, mountains, rivers, so after our death, we see, in addition to what our physical body has become with lightning speed, also that part of our own experiences which has become inwoven with the universe. That part of our own experiences which now incorporates with the whole world-structure, is reflected in those members which we still possess, in our astral body and in our Ego; it is reflected in the same way in which the external world is reflected, here on earth, in our physical organs and through our physical being.

While this is reflected in us, we acquire something that we cannot acquire during our earthly life, something that we shall only acquire later on, during the Jupiter period, in the form of a more external, physical impression. Now we acquire it spiritually, through the fact that our etheric being, outside makes an impression upon us. The impression which is thus made upon us, is, to begin with, a spiritual one; it is made in the form of images; in its image-character it

is, however, the prototype of what we shall one day possess upon Jupiter: namely, the Spirit-Self.

A Spirit-Self is therefore born to us, through the fact that our etheric part becomes inwoven with the universe; this Spirit-Self comes to birth spiritually, not in the form in which we shall have it later on, upon Jupiter.

The etheric body has now detached itself, so that we now have the astral body, the Ego and the Spirit-Self.

The astral body and the Ego therefore remain to us from our earthly life.

You already know that our astral body, in the earthly form in which it was subjected to us, remains with us for a long time after death. The astral body remains with us, because it is permeated with all those things that only pertain to the earthly-human life, and because it cannot immediately expel this. We now pass through a time during which we can only cast off little by little what has become of our astral body as a result of our earthly life.

You see, here on earth, we can only experience, in regard to the astral body, one half at the most of everything through which we pass. We really

experience only half of what takes place in every one of our experiences. Let us take an example: Imagine — this applies, both to good and to evil thoughts and actions — but let us take as an example an evil action: Imagine that you say something bad to another person and that your words hurt him. When we say something unkind, we only experience that part which concerns us personally; we only experience the feelings that prompted us to say those evil words: This is the soul-impression which we gather when we say bad and unkind things. But the other person to whom we addressed our unkind words, has an entirely different impression; he has, as it were, the other half of the impression and feels hurt. The second half of the impression lives in him. What we ourselves experience during our physical life on earth is one thing, and what the other person experiences is another thing.

Now imagine the following: After our death, when we pass retrogradely through our life, we must once more live through everything that other people, outside, have experienced through us. As we go backwards through our life, we experience the effects of our thoughts and actions. Between death and a new birth, we therefore pass through our life by going through it retrogradely. And when we have gone back as far as

our birth, we are ripe for the moment when also that part of our astral body may be cast off, which is permeated with earthly things. It abandons us, and a new state of-existence begins for us when we have cast off our astral body.

The astral body always kept us connected, I might say, with the earth; it maintained this connection in all our experiences. When we pass through our astral body — not in a dreamy condition, but by living through our earthly experiences backwards — we are still connected with our earthly life; we still stand within our earthly existence. Now that we have cast off — but this is not the right expression; it is, however, impossible to use another one — now that we have cast off our astral body, we are quite free of all that pertains to the earth, and we live in the real spiritual world.

A new experience now sets in. This casting-off of the astral body is, again, merely one aspect of the whole experience; the other aspect is an entirely different one. When we have passed through our earthly experiences and no longer have our astral body, we feel, as it were, inwardly filled and permeated with — we cannot say with material — but with Spirit; then we really feel that we are in the spiritual world and the

spiritual world rises up within us. In former times, it rose up before us in the outer world when we contemplated the universe and saw our own etheric body inwoven with the universe. But now it rises up *within* us; we now experience it inwardly. And our Ego rises up within us, as a prototype of what we shall possess physically only upon Venus; our Ego rises up as a prototype of the Life-Spirit.

We now consist of Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit and Ego.

Just as here on earth, we live in a rather dreamy state from our birth until that moment of our childhood in which we acquire self-consciousness, which is the earliest moment of life that we can recall, so we now lead a form of life that is fully conscious, indeed more conscious and higher than our earthly life. However, we experience a purely spiritual life, only when we have detached ourselves from our astral body, from our astral life, retaining only that part of our astral which permeates us inwardly. Consequently, we are, from that time onwards, Spirits among Spirits.

Now another important and essential experience rises up. During our life in the physical world, we carry on our work, do this or that thing and [have] experiences in connection with all these things. (We

just spoke of this). Our experiences are, however, not limited to the physical world; simultaneously and in connection with them, we also experience something else. Although the expression which I shall now use for these simultaneous experiences is just an ordinary, more general expression, let me nevertheless use this word: while we experience these things, we grow tired, we get used up. This is constantly the case: we grow tired. Although our weariness is eliminated for our next state of consciousness through the fact that we sleep, or rather, through the fact that we rest during our sleep, this elimination, or adjustment, is nevertheless only a partial one, for we know, of course, that during our life we gradually become used up, we grow older, and our strength gradually dwindles. Consequently, we also grow tired in a wider sense. When we grow older, we know that we cannot adjust everything by sleeping. Thus we wear out our strength, we grow tired, during our life on earth.

Indeed, we are now able to view this problem from another aspect. After our preceding explanation, we can now advance this problem in a different way; we can ask: Why do the Gods allow us to grow weary? The fact that here on earth we get tired and wear out our strength, gives us something that is really most significant for our whole life. Let us, however, grasp

the idea that we get tired, in a wider sense than the usual one. Let us place it clearly before our soul.

You will grasp it best of all if you imagine it in the following way: Ask any one of those present: Do you know anything concerning the interior of your head? — Probably only a person who is suffering from headache would answer that at the present moment he *does* know something concerning the interior of his head. He alone would feel what the inside of his head is like; all the others would not feel it.

We can feel our organs only when they are not quite in order; we are then to some extent aware of their existence through our feelings. As a rule, we only have a more general feeling of our physical body, and this feeling increases when anything is out of order. But when we only have this general feeling, we know very little concerning the interior of our body. Those who suffer from bad headaches know a little more concerning the inside of their head than an anatomist, who is merely acquainted with the head's vessels. I explained this just now. In growing more and more tired, during the course of our life, we acquire an ever stronger feeling in regard to the body's interior, its spatial interior.

Consider the fact that the more weary we grow, the more the infirmities of life arise, for instance the infirmities of old age. Our life consists therein that we gradually begin to feel and to sense our physical body. We learn to sense this physical part of our being, because it becomes hardened within us and because it pushes itself, as it were, into our being. Just because it develops so slowly, we regard it, I might say, as an insignificant feeling. Its real significance could be gauged, if we could feel (excuse this trivial expression, but it conveys what I wish to say) in the pink of health, like an exuberantly healthy child, and immediately afterwards, for the sake of comparison, like an old man of 80 or 85, whose limbs have grown fragile. This would enable us to experience that feeling more strongly; simply because it develops so slowly and little by little, we do not notice the fact that we gradually spin ourselves into the feeling experience of our physical part, while we grow weary; we do not notice this feeling simply because it develops so slowly. Yet growing weary is a real process. At first, it does not exist at all, for a child is full of exuberant vitality. But later on, fatigue gradually begins to drown the vital forces, and then the process of getting tired breaks through. We have the possibility of growing weary, and during this process (even though it only gives us, let us say, a dim feeling of our body's inner

structure), during this process, something takes place within us, something really takes place within us.

Our life in the physical world only shows us the outer aspect of deep, significant and lofty mysteries. The fact that this dim, insignificant feeling of growing weary accompanies us throughout our life, so that we are able to feel the inner structure of our body, is merely the outer aspect of something that becomes inwoven with us; it is wonderfully woven out of pure wisdom, a complete woof of pure wisdom.

While we thus grow weary during our life and begin to experience ourselves inwardly, a delicate knowledge becomes inwoven with us, a knowledge of the wonderful constitution of our organs, of our inner organs. Our heart grows tired, yet this weariness means that a knowledge of the heart's structure becomes inwoven with us, a knowledge of how the heart is built from out the universe. Our stomach gets tired — most of all, when we spoil it by eating too much — yet during this process that tires the stomach, an image of wisdom from out the cosmos is woven into us, and this image shows us how the stomach is built up.

The lofty, wonderful structure of our organism, of this great work of art, arises within us in the form of an image. But this image only comes to life when we cast off that part of our astral body which is bound to the earth. What now lives within us, what now fills us as LIFE-SPIRIT, is the wisdom connected with our own being, it is the wisdom connected with the wonderful structure of our inner being and this wisdom now lives in us.

Now begins a time in which we compare, as it were, what fills us in the form of Life-Spirit from out the wisdom of our inner being, with the etheric woof that has already been woven into the universe. Our task is now to compare how one thing fits in with the other, and we then build up, in the form of an image, our inner being; we give it the shape which it should have during our next incarnation.

This is how we begin, but little by little our life approaches the World-Midnight, which you will find described in one of the Mystery Plays, in “The Souls’ Awakening”. Particularly after the World-Midnight, we are engaged in a work that consists therein that we now participate in the world’s creative work; we call into life what we afterwards enjoy here, DURING OUR LIFE BETWEEN DEATH AND A NEW BIRTH, WE SHARE

IN THE WORK, WE PARTICIPATE IN THE WEAVING OF THE GODS' IMAGES. We have the privilege of sharing in a divine task, in what the Gods aimed at, when they placed man into the world. We are allowed to prepare our next incarnation.

Of course, this is not only connected with processes that exclusively and egoistically concern our own being, for all manner of other processes take place as well. This may be evident particularly from the following:

If we gradually succeed in experiencing, in spiritual contemplation, this wonderful process — which is, above all, far higher than the one which takes place on earth, when summer and winter alternate, or when the sun rises and sets — and when all that takes place which occurs in the form of earthly work, then something occurs in the spiritual world finally leading to our earthly incarnation, to human existence. This is a lofty, heavenly process, which has not only an external significance, but a deep significance for the whole world.

We also encounter something else, when we contemplate this process. It may sound strange to say this, but you see, the higher mysteries at first

necessarily appear strange in the light of a physical-Sensory contemplation. What rises up before our soul in connection with these mysteries must move us. The more it moves us, the better it is, for these things, the very nature of these things, should not approach our soul so that we remain dry and indifferent. They should not be taken up in such a way that we remain indifferent, dry and cool; but they should, instead, give us a soul-impression of the loftiness and greatness of the divine spiritual world.

We can say: If anybody would undertake to present spiritual science in such a dry way that it does not take hold of our WHOLE being, and so that we do not gain an impression of the loftiness and greatness of the divine-spiritual that pulses and weaves through the world — if, after all these descriptions, we would live on indifferently and dryly, then we would be born without heads, in accordance with the present conditions of the world and in spite of everything we know! We would be born without heads! The structure of our head is something that we are unable to build. In its whole structure, the human head is such a lofty image of the universe, that the human being would be unable to form it, even with the aid of that life-wisdom which is woven into him; he would be unable to prepare it for the next incarnation. All the divine

Hierarchies must cooperate in this work. Your head, this slightly irregular and somewhat transformed sphere, is a real microcosm, a true image of the great world-sphere. Within it lives, within it is collected everything that exists outside, in the universe. All the forces that are active in the different Hierarchies cooperate in order to produce the head. And when we begin to shape our next incarnation, from out [of] the wisdom, which we collected during the process of growing weary, all the Hierarchies cooperate and influence this activity, in order to embody in us, as an image of the whole wisdom of the Gods, what afterwards becomes our head!

While all this occurs, our physical, hereditary stream is being prepared generations ahead, here upon the earth. Just as after our death we can only hand over to the earth what comes from the earth, so our parents and grand-parents only give us that part of our being which pertains to the earth. Our earthly part is merely our exterior, it is merely the external expression within this earthly part. Woven into it, is, in the first place, everything that we ourselves are able to weave in the manner described, and what all the Hierarchies of the Gods weave, before we gain a connection (through conception) with that which enwraps us and clothes us about, when we enter the physical plane.

I explained to you, that the more of this lofty knowledge we take up in our feelings, the better it will be for us. Just consider the fact: We use our head. In so far as we live in materialism, we generally have not the slightest idea that whole Hierarchies of Gods are at work in order to produce our head, in order to mould that which lies, spiritually, at the foundation of our head, so that we are able to live. If we grasp this, in the meaning of a spiritual-scientific knowledge, it will spontaneously be filled with feelings of gratitude and thankfulness towards the whole universe.

Consequently, what we acquire through spiritual science, should incessantly continue to increase and raise our feelings. In the sphere of spiritual science, our sentient life should more and more hold pace with our cognitive work. It is not good to remain behind with our feelings. Whenever we learn to know a new and higher portion of spiritual science, we should be able to unfold, I might say, more and more reverent feelings towards the world's mysteries, which finally lead to the mysteries of man. A true progress in spiritual science really lies in this purifying, spiritual, warmth of our feelings.

Let me mention one more thing because it completes all that we have contemplated in this

lecture. Here, in the physical world, we gradually grow accustomed to life by having, to begin with, the dull consciousness of childhood. At first, we only recognise our mother and little by little we learn to know other people. As we grow accustomed to life in the physical world, we believe that we are constantly coming across new people. As far as our physical consciousness is concerned, this is, in fact, true. But when we pass through the portal of death, we have a real, true connection with all the souls that we encountered during our earthly life. They rise up again before our spiritual eye. The souls with whom we were connected during our earthly life and that crossed the portal of death before us, we find these souls, as it were. The word “to find” really applies to physical conditions, but we may use it here, to define that living way in which souls approach other souls. This “finding” of the souls that crossed the portal of death before us, should, however, be imagined in such a way that we approach them, as it were, in an opposite manner from the one in which we approach human beings, here on the physical plane.

On the physical plane we encounter human beings so that we first approach them physically, and then we gradually become acquainted with their inner being. Their inner being unfolds only when we penetrate into

their inner life. Hence, what we experience inwardly in connection with a human being, is the result of that which develops from out [of] our own inner life. When we ourselves have crossed the portal of death and encounter the souls that have passed through the portal of death before us, we know to begin with: There is that particular soul. We can feel it, we know that it is there. Now we must, however, surrender our whole inner being to the first impression that arises, to the first most abstract impression. Here on earth we should allow other human beings to exercise their influence upon us; but in the spiritual world we must SURRENDER OUR INNER BEING and we must now build up the image, the imagination, ourselves. The imaginative element, what we can look upon, this we must gradually build up. You may have an idea of the soul's experiences after death if you imagine that you do not see it, but that you TAKE HOLD of it ... and as you gradually ENCOMPASS IT WITH YOUR GRASP, you, form an image: you build up an image for yourself. You must therefore build up in inner activity the image of the soul whom you encounter. You realise, as it were: "I am now facing a soul ... What soul is it? It is the soul ...", and this knowledge rises out of your own soul ... "towards whom I had the feelings of a son towards his mother." And you begin to feel: "I experience myself together with this soul". Now you begin to build its

spiritual form. You must be active within it, and then it develops into an image. Through the fact that you build this image together with the other soul, you are united with that dead person, even before you begin, to form its spiritual shape. In this manner you are united with everything with which you were united during your earthly life; that is to say, you now experience these things in their own world. You must discover them, by awakening within you the power of vision, so that you may look upon yourself, but this requires activity on your part.

It is not the same with souls that still dwell in their physical body, with souls that are still alive when we die. Even here on earth, we encounter them in the form of images. Thus we look down upon the earth, and do not need to build up their image, for they already face us as images. Of course, we may weave into these images something that can become spiritual warmth and nourishment for the dead, namely the image which we are able to form through our thoughts for the dead, through our lasting love and memory, or — we know this, as spiritual scientists — by reading something to them.

You see, all this extends the human gaze, so that it penetrates, really penetrates into the real world. If this

rises up before our soul, we begin to realise how little we know of the spiritual world. This was not always the case. Only the completely materialistic people of modern times boast of the great extent of their knowledge. But we know that in the past the human beings were clairvoyant and that this ancient, atavistic clairvoyance was lost only because certain qualities had to be acquired, which disappeared in the midst of an existence connected with a materialistic world. If a real materialist, a thoroughly materialistic thinker, approaches us, he will, of course, say: "It is nonsense to speak of an ancient clairvoyance, or that people had a special knowledge in the past". But if we would only open our physical eyes a little as we pass through the world, we would very soon discover the confutation of such an argument! It is not even so long ago, that people used to know more than they do at the present time.

You know, for we have often considered this matter — but let me mention it again at the conclusion of this lecture — that Lucifer and Ahriman have a share in our spiritual existence. We also know that in the Bible Lucifer is symbolized as a Serpent, as the Serpent on the Tree. The physical serpent, such as we see it to-day, and as modern painters always paint it when they depict the Paradise Scene, is not a real Lucifer; it is

only his outer image, his physical image. The real Lucifer is a Being that remained behind during the Moon-stage of evolution. He cannot be seen upon the earth, among physical objects. If a painter wishes to paint Lucifer's real aspect he would have to paint him so that he can be grasped as an etheric form, through a kind of inner clairvoyant form of contemplation. He would then appear in the shape in which he works upon us; he would show that he is not connected with our head or with our organism in so far as these are exclusively formed by the earth, but that he is connected with the continuation of our head, with the spinal cord. A painter who knows something through spiritual science, would therefore paint Adam and Eve, the Tree, and on the Tree the Serpent, but this serpent would only be a symbol and it would have a human head. If we would come across such a painting to-day, we would assume that the painter has, of course, been able to paint this picture through spiritual science,

Probably such a painting may even be found here in Leipzig; but people do not go about with open eyes, they go through the world with bandaged eyes. In the Art Gallery of Hamburg there is a painting of the Middle Ages by, Master Bertram, setting forth the Paradise Scene. In that painting, the Serpent on the Tree is painted correctly, as described just now. That

picture can be seen there. But other painters have also painted the Paradise Scene in that way. What may we gather from this? That in the Middle Ages, people still knew this, they knew it to the extent of being able to paint it. In other words: It is not so long ago, that human beings were pushed completely on to the physical plane.

The course of man's spiritual history, as related by materialistic thinkers, is, after all, nothing but an outer deception, because they think that man always had the aspect which he assumed in the course of the past few centuries, whereas it is not so long ago that he used to look into the spiritual world with the aid of his ancient clairvoyance. He had to abandon the spiritual world, because he was not free, and in order to acquire full freedom and his Ego-consciousness, it was necessary that he should leave the spiritual world. Now he must once more find his way into the spiritual world.

Spiritual science therefore prepares something very important and essential: namely, that we may once more penetrate livingly into the spiritual world. Again and again let us conjure up in our soul the necessity of feeling that this small number of men that is now living in the very midst of a materialistic world and is

led through its Karma to the possibility of grasping mankind's most important task for the future, that this small number of men is called upon to fulfil important, most important tasks, through its soul-life. We should realise without any pride, we should realise modestly and humbly the great difference between a soul that is gradually finding its way into the spiritual world, and all the people outside, who have not the slightest idea of this, who are, above all, NOT WILLING to have any idea of it. This fact should not merely arouse in us discouraging and painful feelings, but produce feelings that incite us to continue our work with increasing energy and to work faithfully within the stream of spiritual science, to which we were led through our Karma.

When we were together last, I also mentioned that when a human being passes through the portal of death before having lived through the whole of his life, then that part which is given to him in the form of an etheric body has not been used up completely. When a human being passes through the portal of death in his youth, then his etheric body might still have worked for years upon his physical body. But these forces do not go lost; they are still there. I also mentioned that in the present time, through the fact that every day and every hour death so numerous

approaches mankind, many, many etheric bodies that might still have worked for a long time upon their physical body, here on the physical plane, are handed over to the spiritual-etheric world and hover in it. The forces that might, for decades, have provided for the physical body, become spiritual forces, that cooperate in the spiritual development of humanity. Thus a time will come, when these forces that constitute these etheric bodies, can be used for the spiritual progress of humanity; but this time will only come, if here on earth there will be human souls who are able to understand this.

When the terrible events of the present shall have passed over the earth and there will be peace once more, then the souls of those who are still living on the earth in human bodies, will have the possibility of grasping something of the fact that all those who have gone into the spiritual world before their time have their etheric bodies in that world and that they can ray their forces into the earth. It will be necessary that this fact be grasped by these souls. These souls can then cooperate in that spiritual progress which is rendered possible particularly through the many deaths of self-sacrifice.

Imagine what it would mean if spiritual science were to disappear, and if no one were to have any comprehension for all that is being prepared in the spiritual world through these deaths of self-sacrifice! Imagine what this would mean! In that case, all those forces would become the property of Beings who would use them for other purposes than those for which they should be used, in accordance with the plan and resolution of the Gods who follow the right course of development.

This is an admonishment that also comes from the events of our time, an admonishment to the effect that we should stand fully within all that which constitutes the spiritual world. For even these events of our time have their spiritual aspect. What they reveal outwardly, in the form of blood, death and sacrifices, is the external expression of an inner spiritual course of events, which should, however, be grasped in the right spirit.

Of this I wish to remind you again and again, with the words that conclude our present considerations:

Aus dem Mut der Kämpfer,
Aus dem Blut der Schlachten,
Aus dem Leid Verlassener,

Aus des Volkes Opfertaten,
Wird erwachsen Geistesfrucht,
Lenken Seelen Geist-bewusst,
Ihren Sinn ins Geisterreich.

(TRANSLATION)

From the courage of the fighters,
From the blood of the battles,
From the sufferings of the abandoned,
From the nation's deeds of sacrifice,
Shall grow out a spiritual fruit,
If souls lead, in Spirit-consciousness,
Their heart and mind into the Spirit-realm.

2. The Influence of the Dead on the Life of Man on Earth

FROM YESTERDAY'S lecture you will have seen how the spiritual world, in which we are between death and a new birth, and the physical world interpenetrate. Not only so; the spiritual world and the physical interpenetrate even in our so-called physical life between birth and death. We ourselves give the directions, as it were, for the way we are born with such and such characteristics. For we are connected between death and a new birth with what is taking place here in the physical world, and, among other things, with the stream of inheritance which eventually leads to our own birth.

We may now consider in a more inward way the whole line of evolution which we studied yesterday more externally. We will try to bring before our souls the connection of man with the spiritual world from a certain special aspect. Between birth and death we are living here in the physical world, and the physical world is known to us through our sense perceptions. It is a trite saying and we need scarcely repeat it: If we did not have our sense organs, we could know nothing of our connection with this physical world. All that

gives us this connection through the sense organs with the physical world, falls away from us when we pass through the gate of death. Hence we may even say: It is our specific task between birth and death to make acquaintance with the physical world. We are incorporated in this physical body in order to make ourselves acquainted through it with the physical world.

Now we are not only members of the physical world, but equally of the spiritual worlds. The next spiritual world, as it were adjoining this physical, is the world which we have grown accustomed to call the ethereal or elemental. Whether or not the expression is really fitting is a matter of less consequence. To begin with, this elemental world is an unknown world for the human being as he now lives in the physical. It is, in fact, the first of the super-sensible worlds but it is no less fraught with significance for man than this physical world of the senses. For as soon as our sense is awakened for the elemental world — which happens when we are able to perceive Imaginatively — we realise that this world is peopled by many beings, no less abundantly than is the physical. Man himself, inasmuch as he has an etheric body, belongs to the elemental world. As an ether-being, man too is a citizen of the elemental world; only the conditions in

the elemental world are somewhat different from the conditions in the physical.

To begin with, I must say something on this one point: the power of perception for the elemental world cannot begin in man till he is able entirely to free himself from that which makes him earthly man. In general it is not even difficult for him to do this. True, it is more difficult for the man of today than for the man of primeval times. We have all heard of the primeval atavistic clairvoyance. For the most part it consisted in this very fact: man was able to free himself from that which makes him earthly man. As earthly men, as you all know, we are formed of solid matter only to a very small extent. To a large extent we consist of liquid; and the moment we can emancipate ourselves from what is solid in us, the moment we feel ourselves only in our liquid part, Imaginative experiences can emerge. It is only our existence in the solid element which prevents our knowing by Imaginative perception all that surrounds us as the elemental world. Imaginative perception will surely return to mankind even as it has been lost. Only the old Imaginative clairvoyance which is lost was in a way unconscious and dream-like, while that which will gradually arise in our Fifth post-Atlantean epoch will be a fully conscious Imaginative seership. By a

perfectly normal and natural process of evolution it will enter into human nature.

Let us now return to what I said before. Our relation to the elemental world is different from our relation to the ordinary, physical world. To begin with, I will give one example to confirm this. In the physical world — apparently at any rate — we determine our relationships with other beings by our own free human choice. We form our friendships for ourselves, likewise our other relations to the beings that surround us. In the elemental world, in which we are through our etheric body, this is no longer the case in the same direct way. Through our whole life in the elemental world we are in a more or less close relationship to certain other elemental beings. As an independent elemental being — for such we are by virtue of our etheric body — we are related to a number of other elemental beings, who accompany us throughout our life, and we may compare this relationship to the relation of the Sun to the encircling planets. Our own etheric body is a kind of Sun elemental being, and is actually accompanied by a number of elemental beings belonging to it, like the planets to the Sun. These elemental beings, together with it, constitute a kind of sevenfold entity, as do the planets and the Sun according to the older conception.

During our whole physical life between birth and death, there is a constant interplay between these our elemental satellites and ourselves. Not only does our feeling, our condition, depend on the way in which our elemental or etheric body is related to its 'planets'; our relation to the outer world, to certain outer beings, and notably to other human beings, is regulated by the mutual relations between these 'planets' and our own etheric body. In future time there will be a kind of medicine which will reckon especially with what I have now said; there will be a medical, physiological conception which will ascertain how the one or the other satellite is related to the etheric body; and according to this, it will be possible to diagnose the sick or healthy condition of the patient. For what is called illness today is in truth only the outer physical picture of what is there in reality. In reality there is some kind of irregularity in what I have here compared to a planetary system, and the illness is but an image of this irregularity.

Of course, one might say forthwith: 'Well, let the people who know this establish a new pathology. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*, now let occultism show its art!' Well, it will do so the moment its legs are freed! A man cannot dance whose legs are tied, and by the fettering of the legs in this case I mean the presence of modern

materialism which has simply confiscated the science of medicine. This state of affairs cannot be improved by one individual or another doing this or that it can only be improved by the common will of a larger number of people, strong enough to bring about a system of medical practice which will make the penetration of medicine with spiritual principles a practical possibility.

One thing it is important to perceive. St. Paul did not speak in vain words of untold importance which have, however, never been rightly understood. For people keep on imagining that they are Christian while in reality they are not. St. Paul said that sin came into the world through the law, i.e. sin is there *through* the law. In a wider sense, that which mars the order of things is there through the law. Even today these truths can only be hinted at. For as a rule, if anything is not in order, our materialistic age will always cry aloud for a law — quite unaware that whatever is not in order comes from the very laws that are made. But, as I said, such a thing can only be hinted at. A very great deal will yet be necessary towards an understanding of these things. I said, people only imagine that they are Christians. For such a passage as this one by St. Paul, though it is read by countless people, is very little understood.

Through the fact that we are etheric beings, we belong to an elemental world, and there is a certain system which stands in a near relation to ourselves. This system consists of the elemental beings or ether-beings who accompany us. Their forces are ordered or arranged in a certain way; and when we pass through the gate of death, it is they, by their forces, who draw our etheric body out of our physical body, and place it — that is to say, place the human being himself to begin with — into the elemental world. The elemental world, as I have indicated, is clearly to be perceived by Imaginative cognition. In it are a multitude of beings whom we may call nature-spirits, but not only these. In it are also all those human beings who have just passed physically through the gate of death. They are only there, however, for a short time, as you know, for a few days. Then what we call the etheric body is given over to the elemental world; a second corpse is laid aside. But we must not imagine that this, the second body which we lay aside, is at all rapidly disintegrated in that world. That is not so. True, in a certain sense, it does become dissolved in the elemental world. It dissolves, it becomes ever more tenuous. But it does not become imperceptible to those beings who by their very nature can perceive Imaginatively.

The elemental or etheric body is always perceptible, for instance, to the human being himself, who has passed through the gate of death. True, he has laid aside this elemental body and he now lives on through the time between death and a new birth. But he remains constantly related to the elemental body which he has laid aside. It is not as with the physical body, to which man loses his relationship when he has cast it off. With the elemental body the opposite is the case; man preserves his relationship to it. Moreover, this relationship of man to his elemental or etheric body can work right down into the physical world.

When a human being here in the physical world has made his soul receptive, when he has acquired the elemental or Imaginative power of perception, then, too, he can consciously converse in his life of thought with the dead. Only, of course, these thoughts are far more refined and delicate than those of ordinary life. Thus he is consciously connected with the dead. Now the connection of which man thus becomes conscious is always there in the subconscious, whenever there was a relation during earthly life between the one who has remained behind in the physical, and the one who has risen into the spiritual world. Let us assume that we lost a beloved friend through death. One who has attained Imaginative perception will be aware of it

but, whether we know it or not, the dead human being works upon us. He works — if I may so describe it — as though he were pouring his will into the etheric body which he has laid aside, as into a mirror, and the mirror, in its turn, were sending on the rays to us. *Via* the elemental or etheric body, the dead react upon the living. This, as it were, is the mediate influence of the dead upon the living.

To describe where this mediate influence comes to expression, I may say, it is expressed in our ordinary conceptions and ideas which we carry with us through the world. As a rule, the human being — especially in our materialistic age — is aware only of the conceptions and ideas which portray to him the outer physical reality. But among the conceptions which we thus carry through the world, some are perpetually living which are so fine and delicate that they are not directly perceptible; we simply do not pay attention to them. If we were wont to observe our soul's life more intimately, we should soon recognise their presence. But we constantly let this finer, more delicate life of the soul be overwhelmed and drowned by the coarser ideas which flow into us from the surrounding physical world. If it were not so, we should soon perceive that finer, more intimate thoughts are constantly there in us. These are due to those who were connected with

us and have passed before us through the gate of death; and who, especially in the first period after their passage through the gate of death, are able to communicate their deeds to us.

Through the fact that as ether-beings we belong to the elemental world, we thus bear the being of the dead with us in our own conceptions, in our own life of ideas, for a certain length of time. If we would speak of 'Monism' on any basis of reality, we should chiefly speak of the Monism which I have just described — the Monism that is formed by the working together of the living and the dead. In truth, those who have passed through the gate of death are by no means far away from us; they are far nearer to us than we believe.

Now man develops more and more as he lives through the time between death and a new birth, and so he becomes able to work upon the world down here not only indirectly but directly. From a certain time onward we can perceive this influence upon us of the departed; their rays of force begin to penetrate into our soul's life. But this immediate influence cannot work its way directly into our thoughts, into our conceptual life. It works its way rather into our habits, into our whole way of life and conduct; into all this there streams an influence working downward from

spiritual worlds, coming to us from those who have passed before us through the gate of death.

We must however realise that this working together of the dead and the living depends on many different conditions. The dead man is in an environment wherein there are beings of his own kind, that is, beings of soul, and all the beings who belong to the higher Hierarchies, down to man himself. And inasmuch as the etheric body which he has laid aside is his mediator, he can also have perceptions of the human beings down here, who are, as it were, veiled from him through the physical body. With the help of his etheric body, he can penetrate the veil. He who has passed through the gate of death is of course subject to the conditions under which man must live in the world of soul and Spirit; he must submit to them. I need only mention one main point, and you will understand what I mean in this connection. We know that throughout the world in which we live Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces are working in the most manifold ways. If these Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces did not entice us, all that comes to expression in man as wrong and evil actions would not be there in the world. The Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces must work upon man, and must give him the opportunity to follow and obey them. Once this fact is brought home

to us strongly enough, we shall recognise that man, after all, is a very different being from what we often make him out to be with our hostile criticisms. If we had the faculty, already in the physical world, always to see how the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic work in man, we should judge our fellow men quite differently.

I do not say that we should generally be less critical; for when we divert our adverse judgement from man — though we should no longer be fighting against man himself — we must still be fighting Lucifer and Ahriman. But against man as man, we should be infinitely more tolerant. Now he who lives in the soul life in the time between death and a new birth, practises this tolerance both in relation to the beings who are with him in the spiritual world and in relation to those who are still incarnated as men here in the physical life. It is part of the very character of man, when he has passed through the gate of death, that he acquires this tolerance. He always sees through the fact that Lucifer and Ahriman are playing such and such a part in a human being. He does not say, 'That is a bad man, following evil desires', but he sees through the fact that Lucifer is playing such and such a part in him. He does not say, 'That is an envious fellow' but he says, 'Ahriman is playing such and such a part in him'.

He who lives above, between death and birth, judges in this way, it belongs to his very being to do so, just as it belongs to our being to have good eyesight (if we are sound and healthy). Moreover, since this belongs to his very being, it hurts the dead man infinitely when, maintaining his connection with us in the physical life (the connection which was begun during his own life on Earth), he comes up against an altogether different spirit in ourselves. Assume, for instance, that out of our personal antipathy we meet with peculiar hate another human being, who was also connected with the dead man. This hate will signify infinite pain for the dead who tries to approach us — as he must do, since he is still connected with us. This hatred must first be overcome by him; it is like a sword, a jagged sword, a spear that is shivered constantly against him.

And so the way in which the dead man tries to work into us — his own experience as he does so — depends very, very much on the attunement of our soul. Into our ordinary thoughts and ideas borrowed from the surrounding world, into our feelings and sentiments, into our temperament and habits, these influences of the dead are working as I have now described. And there is a constant mutual interaction

between what goes on in the realm of those who have passed through the gate of death, and our own souls.

If you bear all this in mind, you will say to yourself: Complicated workings are contained in that which we bear within us as our soul; and much is necessary fully to perceive all the mysterious forces that pulsate in the human soul. The soul has very little in its own consciousness of all that is pulsating in it. But the mood and attunement of the soul, and its ability or inability in one direction or another, depend on all these things. For on a large scale all this is determined once more through our karma. The fact that we are brought together here with this man or that, and that they in turn work down upon us in the way I have described, is, of course, connected with our karma in the widest sense.

In bringing all this before us, we must realise, of course, that our age has a real longing for what Spiritual Science brings to men; and the real longings are frequently satisfied today by quite erroneous methods. Thus there are many people today who have decidedly got beyond the prejudice which people had in the middle of the 19th century, and even in the last third of the 19th century — the prejudice that all things of the soul can still be explained from physical

and physiological effects. Frequently, however, half- or quarter-truths have far worse effects than complete errors. Thus it is a half- or quarter-truth which underlies what is so frequently described today as analytical psychology or psychoanalysis. People are truly seeking but they are groping in the dark; they divine that many things are hidden in the foundations of the soul, but they cannot resolve to take the real steps into the spiritual world, so as to find what is hidden there, in the depths of the soul.

What do the psychoanalysts say? They say: Observe a human being as he meets us just in ordinary life. His feeling and condition as a whole depends very largely, not only on what is there in his consciousness, but on a variety of factors which lie in the unconscious, beneath the threshold of consciousness. There comes a man, feeling in a depressed mood; an irregularity in his whole nervous apparatus is apparent. In such a case — the psychoanalyst opines — we must look and see what he may have experienced perhaps many years ago; experiences which he may not altogether have assimilated, but which he pressed down into the subconscious.

The psychoanalyst divines quite well that that which has been removed from consciousness has not

therefore been removed from reality; it is still there, down in the subconscious. But his idea is this: If we can only entice it forth into the consciousness by a kind of catechising process, then we shall perceive what is consuming and gnawing at him down below. (I cannot, of course, explain psychoanalysis here in all its ramifications; I will only show you a few features of it.)

Starting from this point, the psychoanalyst looks for many things in the foundations of the soul. Years ago, the human being had perhaps this or that ideal of life, this or that hope or plan. He did not carry it out; he was not able to do so. It is no longer in his consciousness, for he is living in his present life. But it is not eliminated from the reality of his soul; there it goes on gnawing away and consuming him. And his whole mood and condition depends on what is there beneath in his subconsciousness. Perhaps he had an unhappy love affair — that is what the psychoanalysts generally find, for they are on the lookout for it. It is an isolated province in his subconsciousness; he has fought against it, but it goes on working. Notably it will go on working — so believe the psychoanalysts — if feelings of love were there, while the beloved being was removed; that is to say, if the love remained unsatisfied.

In addition to these disappointed spring time hopes of life — in addition to what I have just indicated — the psychoanalyst seeks in the depths of the soul for what we might call the ‘animal morass’ at the very basis of human life — the ‘animal morass’ or slime of life working constantly upward to the surface — connected, as they conceive it, with all that man possesses as an animal being, playing upward into his soul’s life. Some psychoanalysts will go still further: if we get further and further down, we find at length what plays upward into the soul out of racial and national connections and the like, playing into the soul’s life in more or less unconscious ways. And at last, at the very bottom, there is something demonic — the most undefined of all — lying even beneath the ‘animal morass’, at the very ground of life. Such people, who are among the special followers of the modern psychoanalysts, will sometimes gently hint that in these demonic depths beneath are to be found the impulses that lead people to such subjects as Gnosis, Theosophy and Anthroposophy. Although it is hinted at in a rather veiled way, still the hint is there. Read one of the last numbers of the periodical *Wissen und Leben* — I think it is called — and you will find such hints at one place and another, albeit they are rather hidden between the lines.

I said half- or quarter-truths often have a far worse effect than complete mistakes. Analytical psychology in its search for the sub-conscious foundations of the soul contains half and quarter-truths. Compare it with what we have pointed out today. The realities that live in the foundations of the soul work in towards us from the realm of the dead. Here we are led to quite a different way of thinking; we shall not seek for the 'animal morass' of the soul; we shall not try to interpret this or that mood of the soul from the aspect of disappointed love affairs. On the contrary, we shall often have to seek the underlying cause of an unhappy mood of soul in this or that departed one, for whom we are making difficulties through our own conduct — which difficulties find expression in dissatisfactions of one kind or another, surging up into our consciousness.

In short, we shall do well to bring home to ourselves with true reverence this actual connection with the spiritual world. It is the connection of our world, not with an abstract, vaguely pantheistic spiritual world, but with the real spiritual world wherein those who have passed through the gate of death are living as real beings. They are with us even now, as they were with us in life. But what they do with us now touches our soul far more nearly than what they did in life,

when we were always separated from them by our body and theirs, which stood between us like a barrier.

Then comes a later time, when man has become utterly free from the astral body — when he has laid aside the astral. Not long after this, man is able to work down from the spiritual world into the physical in a more inward way. In former times, the outer life was frequently arranged instinctively according to these truths. Customs that arose in outer life might often be referred, it is true, to ordinary outer reasons, but an inner reason underlay the outer, though it was often only known by instinct. I said: the dead, soon after passing through the gate of death, are in direct connection with the human beings whom they have left behind, especially with those to whom they are lovingly united, and the connection is such that they work upon our habits. For this reason, in the times when such things were still felt instinctively, care was taken that a son should remain as far as possible in the whole circle with which his parents were connected. Learning the same business, spending his life in the same profession, he should remain where access was easier for them. All in all, this conservative way of holding on to the same stream of life was an instinctive expression of the desire to make it easier for those who had passed through the gate of death to

work in upon those whom they had left behind. For if the latter were in similar circumstances to those in which the dead themselves had lived, it made it easier for the dead to find the way to them. In time to come historians will well observe such intimate impulses and underlying reasons in the historic evolution of mankind.

Now, as we know, when man has been still longer dead, he will have completely laid aside the astral body. But this only happens after decades, for we experience things much slower in the spiritual world than in the physical. One year of the spiritual world corresponds to 30 years of the physical. Man has a way of hastening here in the physical world whereas in the spiritual world, so to speak, he always has to revolve in far larger circles. So, as one spiritual year is equal to 30 earthly years, in one year of the spiritual he experiences approximately the same piece of the world as in 30 years of the physical. He thereby experiences it more intensively, more inwardly.

All in all, what man lives through on Earth is multiply connected with the great universe, the macrocosm. Therefore, what is experienced in the microcosm, in man himself, always finds expression even in the numerical relations to the macrocosm. I

will only draw your attention to one point: Reckon up the number of days in an average human life; you get the same number of years — purely as a number — which the Sun requires to process through the complete Platonic year, the cosmic year. Man's life is numbered by as many days as the Sun requires years to advance through the whole cosmic circle in its precession from one sign of the zodiac to another. The Sun requires about 25,900 and a few more years to process through all the signs of the zodiac. Man lives for about as many days — though, of course, it is not always equal — in his individual life between birth and death.

Another interesting connection is this one: man has as many breaths in one day as the number of days he lives, or as the number of years it takes for the Sun to process through the whole zodiac. You see, therefore, in the very deepest sense the world is ordered according to measure and number. One should imagine that this delicate incorporation of man into the universe — this correspondence of the harmonies — would lead the crude materialists of our time beyond their limited outlook which sees nothing more in the whole universe than a great mechanism. Truly it is a strange mechanism which contains all its individual beings organically within itself, in

wondrously harmonious numerical relation to the whole.

It is indeed a strange thing. When we consider the world spiritually, we can actually say: In the evolution which takes its course between death and a new birth, man advances more slowly in order that he may do things more thoroughly. Not only so; he advances as many times more slowly in the spiritual world as Saturn courses around the sun more slowly than the Earth. Saturn runs its course around the Sun as many times more slowly than the Earth, as man in the spiritual world moves more slowly than he moves on the physical Earth. For this reason, and not because they knew less than the astronomers of today, the ancients reckoned Saturn as the outermost planet of the solar system. Even astronomically speaking, they were right, for the other planets which are now included — Uranus and Neptune — joined the system at a later time; moreover, they circle around in quite a different order, even in a different rotation than the planets belonging to the solar system proper.

Now at least one such spirit-year — that is, 30 earthly years — must have elapsed before the soul (assuming, needless to say, that a normal age of 70 or 80 was attained) can enter not merely into the habits,

but into the whole thought and outlook, into the spiritual life of those whom they have left behind or who join on of their own free will. Nevertheless, in this way too the dead work into our life on a very large scale. It is so indeed. In the whole spirit, in the whole way of thought in which we live, we bear within us the impulses of men who died long ago and who work into us. Altogether, the connection of the future with the past is brought about precisely in this way, through this actual connection of the dead with the living.

The mediate manifestation of the dead, through the etheric body which they have laid aside, works upon our Imaginative cognition. That influence which enters, as above described, into our habits, works upon our Inspirational cognition. And the influence to which I now refer, which can only work when man has passed through a whole spirit-year, works — if we are conscious of it — into our Intuitive cognition. But in any event these influences are working all the time; nor can we truly understand the sense of evolution unless we bear these things in mind.

Forgive my inserting at this point a personal remark — you know I am not fond of doing so, and I do so seldom. Anyone who looks at what I wrote when I first began my work, decades ago, will see that at that time

I disregarded what I had to bring forward as my own opinion. I did not write *my* opinion about Goethe, but tried to express the thoughts that came forth from Goethe. I did not write my own *Theory of Knowledge*, but a *Theory of Knowledge implicit in Goethe's Conception of the World*. In this way it is possible quite consciously to connect oneself with men long dead and work out of their spirit. Indeed this is what gives one, as it were, a true, legitimate certificate to influence the living. It is a bad certificate which people of our time are so very keen upon: namely, that every individual, scarcely has he conceived an opinion, should wish to communicate it forthwith to as many followers as possible.

He who is aware of the conditions of existence, the fundamental laws that work from the spiritual world, knows that in truth a man cannot rightly work into the depths of the souls of his fellowmen until he is dead — strange as it may sound. Even then he cannot, till he has passed through a spirit-year, that is to say, 30 earthly years. Infinitely much would be achieved if once this selflessness gained ground a little in the world, so that those who lived later would connect their own work with the dead, and consciously try to maintain the continuity in evolution. Whether it be a pure elective affinity, or some other relationship

brought about by karma, to attach ourselves to those who are trying so hard to send the pure rays of their influence out of the spiritual world is of infinite significance, and it is so most of all if we do it consciously.

I have tried to call forth in you a feeling for the way in which the so-called dead and the so-called living work together. Now we must realise that the conditions are very different in the spiritual world and here. You will find a great deal about the conditions of experience in the spiritual world in the lectures *Life Between Death and a New Birth* which I gave a few years ago in Vienna. But of course one can only select a few points especially important from one aspect or another. Now here it must be said that there is in the spiritual world something very similar, and again dissimilar, to our physical experience.

Before we enter the physical world in the full sense, we undergo the embryo period of existence. There the conditions of life are very different from what they become the moment we enter fully into the physical world as breathers of the outer air. Now in a certain sense and style, the time we go through after death in the first spirit year, which is so often called the period of Kamaloca, is very like the embryo period of

existence. Just as the human being calls to his aid, as it were, another human being by whom he lets himself be borne into the physical world through the 10 lunar months, so likewise, through all the wishes and cravings which hold him to the physical and which he slowly casts aside, he lets himself be borne into the spiritual world. Moreover, his consciousness in this first year of the spirit still to some extent resembles his consciousness in the physical world, although the faculties which are only to be acquired in the physical world can only be transmitted mediately through the etheric body. But after this first spirit-year a far higher consciousness ensues than anything which we can have here in the physical body.

If you remember many things that were said in the above-mentioned lectures, you will see how very different is this consciousness in the spiritual world. You need only remember how much our consciousness depends on what can enter into us. When we go about as ordinary men in the physical world, the phenomena of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms of nature, and of the physical human kingdom, come into us along with other experiences of soul — experiences of civilisation and the like. But after death, what becomes of the major part of that which enters our soul life through the faculties we possess here in the

physical world? The mineral world as such — this we no longer perceive at all, as you are well aware; and of the plant world we only see the all-pervading life. You can read in my *Theosophy* how these things are, as we ascend within the spiritual world.

Experience in the spiritual world is in fact quite different in kind. Indeed, for these things, there are no words which you can understand. Our language after all is created for the physical; hence it is always difficult to describe these things correctly, and one can easily be misunderstood. Above all, we can only express ourselves by comparisons. Consider the following: here in the physical world you stand as it were, in a single point of the whole world structure, and look out with your eyes in all directions of the surrounding sphere. In the spiritual world it is not so; there you look in from the circumference as it were, towards the interior of a hollow sphere. But this is only a comparison; in reality it is not a hollow sphere, for time plays a greater part in it than space. Nevertheless, it is from the circumference that you observe all things. Hence the conditions of ideation are quite different; even *within* your thinking the conditions are quite different.

I will describe it somewhat crudely: suppose a man had passed through the gate of death 60, 70 or 80 years ago, or even earlier. He feels distinctly a certain inner experience. When you feel hunger in the physical life, you do not say 'the hunger is here' or 'the hunger is there' but 'the hunger is *in* you'. Or again, take the case when you feel pain in this or that part of your body. So it is when you look inward from the whole surrounding sphere; you feel that at a certain place there is something. You know there is something that wishes to have something to do with you, and now you must begin making great efforts *to get rid of it*. Think what this means: to get rid of that which has manifested itself. And only when you have got rid of it, only then does there emerge the true being that is trying to reveal itself. Thus we may say: as spiritual beings we have an idea within us, but the idea tells us nothing whatever as yet; we must first get rid of it. Then, when we have got rid of it, then do we find within us — strange as it may sound, it is so — an angel or archangel who is revealing himself to us. His presence is first announced to us in the idea; yet we ourselves must first achieve the actual presence. Perception in the spiritual world is thus bound up with real labour, with a strong exertion of our forces. And only the souls who have remained here in the physical body can to some extent manifest themselves upward

to the dead without their undergoing this exertion. This is what happens when you concentrate your thoughts on the dead man, or bring something before him by reading to him or the like. In all that I have been saying, I only wished to make it clear to you how altogether different are the conditions of life and experience in the spiritual world. This being so, you will no longer find it surprising that one year of spirit time represents 30 years of physical time. For in the spirit we are in the circumference and look in towards the centre; it is very important to remember this.

I made it my chief task today to describe to some extent how the souls who have passed through the gate of death work down into the world in which the others have remained behind, with whom they were connected while in the physical body. Thus you have seen once more, from another aspect, how the world is an interconnected whole. Truly it is only for outer physical perception that the dead are dead. In reality, the moment they pass through the gate of death they have a new way of access to our souls. That is the difference. They now work into us from within, whereas they formerly worked into us from without. For us, these things should more and more become no mere external theories; they should live their way into our consciousness, till they are no longer a merely

theoretic 'world conception', but world perception, or even world feeling. Then will Spiritual Science bear the fruits which it is meant to bear, and which it truly can.

One more remark in conclusion. Think what it means that at a certain period between death and a new birth man must have the inner Feeling that he carries the Hierarchies *within* him as his own inner experience. It is really so. This might well lead the human being to the most appalling arrogance, which would live as a dim feeling in his soul when he is reborn. In ancient times there was a natural limit to such arrogance, in this way: human beings passing through the gate of death and entering into the spiritual world were somehow aware that it was not they themselves who were beholding, but that the highest beings of the Hierarchies were living in them and communicating the vision to them. But man has lost this connection in the spiritual world, just as in the physical world he has lost the old atavistic clairvoyance. Instead there must now come into us what St. Paul expressed in the words 'Not I, but Christ in me', which words are endowed with real spiritual feeling when we say 'Out of God we are born; into Christ we die'.

If we learn this in all its depths, through the feeling which can come to us in Spiritual Science, that Christ is for the Earth, then we shall rightly place ourselves into the vision from the surrounding sphere. Then, having lived through the gate of death with the right feeling: 'Into Christ we die', and gazing in from the surrounding sphere, among all the beings whom we behold — beings of the Hierarchies, elemental beings, beings such as the human souls, incarnate or discarnate — among all these, we shall also find our own *Ego-being*; and we shall behold from outside the relation of this our own Ego to all the other beings. To be able to have this feeling after we have passed through the gate of death is of infinite importance. Only if we can have this feeling towards *our own Ego*, only then can we find our true way again into physical incarnation. And there is no other way of having this feeling; we can only owe it to the right passage through the gate of death — the passing through the gate of death with the inner feeling: 'we have died into Christ'. This union with Christ gives us the possibility to behold, as it were with the eye of the soul of Christ Himself, our relation within the spiritual world, to behold ourselves as Ego being among the other beings.

This, my dear friends, is what I would always like to attain. When, as a result of such studies as we have made today, we take with us once more a new piece of knowledge, the knowledge should also be transformed into inner feeling. Even if all the ideas developed in this lecture should have passed by us like a dream; if the one fundamental feeling remains, which I have sought to gather up in these concluding words, then we shall carry with us into our further life the real fruits of such a line of thought. For I have tried to show how the death in Christ can place us rightly into the spiritual world — so rightly, so abundantly, that we can carry it with us through the physical world in our next earthly incarnation

We remain together in such feelings, recognising that they have power to unite us more intensely. So there will by and by arise in the world the true, invisible community of those who are devoted to Anthroposophy, holding together through such inner feelings born out of the clear ideas of Spiritual Science. The world has need of this indivisible community of souls, able to carry into it the inner force of such communion as I have just described. In this sense we will be together spiritually for the future, though for a time we may not be together physically. So indeed it should always be among us; our

communion in the spirit should sustain our coming together in the physical.

3. The Problem of Destiny

What spiritual science has to say about life and the configuration of the spiritual worlds, is gained through knowledge, through a knowledge of the objective facts to which we are led through faculties enabling us to have an insight into these things. We already know this. In cases where we have to justify spiritual science as such, or to defend it against the environing world, we shall, therefore, have to base our justifications only upon the development of certain faculties to which we must draw attention and which enable us to attain to an insight into the spiritual worlds; and we shall then proceed by explaining that these faculties enable us to know the corresponding configuration of the conditions of life pertaining to the spiritual worlds. The facts which come to light in this way — many things are almost self-evident, nevertheless it is good to draw attention to them — the facts which thus come to light, as well as those of the physical world which can be observed through the senses, should never be met with objections arising from human desires, human wishes. Although this is so obvious, we nevertheless frequently hear objections raised against certain statements of spiritual science, objections based upon human desires and human wishes, for instance,

objections of the following kind: If spiritual science gives this or that explanation concerning the spiritual worlds, I do not wish to make closer acquaintance with spiritual science; for, if the things in the spiritual world really correspond with these descriptions, I shall never adapt myself to such a configuration of the spiritual world. This objection is very frequent, in spite of its absurdity. It is not only advanced in this absurd and easily detectable form, but also under the mask of all kinds of negative attitudes toward spiritual science. Although, on the one hand, the knowledge gained through spiritual science could never be based upon the argument that the world has a meaning only if the things pertaining to the spiritual world present a certain definite aspect (it is, after all, possible to *know* the real aspect of these things), and although this hypothesis, namely, that the world only has a meaning if it presents a certain definite aspect, can never enable us to say anything concerning the configuration of the spiritual worlds, (for this can only be done upon the foundation of real knowledge,) it is, on the other hand, possible to point out the significance of spiritual science for the whole life of man, seeing that spiritual science and its results actually exist.

A fortnight ago, I have explained to you from a particular aspect the significance of a spiritual-scientific mentality for the evolution of present-day humanity, and particularly its significance in the face of the demands and requirements of our time. To-day I wish to draw attention to a few other things, which will lead us more deeply into the real significance of spiritual science for humanity, and in particular for modern man. And in order to present the other side as well, I shall also point out the objections against spiritual science, arising from our modern civilization, and what kind of opposition we must encounter. The spiritual faculties which enable the spiritual investigator to have an insight into the facts of the spiritual world develop gradually, as I have frequently described to you. They develop in such a way that, at first, we learn to know the chief facts of spiritual life, the principal things connected with the evolution of earthly life, with the repeated lives on earth, with the life between death and a new birth, and so forth. But it is quite possible to speak, not only of these great general aspects, of these general truths, but also of certain particular truths. If we grow more and more acquainted with special aspects of truth, spiritual science itself will also acquire greater value for the individual and concrete life of a human being. Seen from outside, human life is, to begin with, a riddle, for

if it were not so, we would not have to pass through a course of development rendering us more and more capable. For our capabilities and faculties — this applies particularly to the soul — must be the result of victories; our strength grows if we overcome difficulties. In the spiritual sphere, too, our strength increases through the fact that the world has, to begin with, an enigmatic aspect, for the effort which we must make in order to solve these riddles gives us strength, gradually makes us more perfect also as regards the whole course of human evolution. We need not be afraid that life becomes less interesting through the fact that the riddles presented by the physical world are partly solved by gaining an insight into the spiritual world. In every sphere of life there are riddles, and when we enter the spiritual world we shall discover new riddles. But the experience which we have gained in trying to solve, from out the spiritual world, riddles of life and of man connected with the physical world, makes us, as it were, confident that also the deeper riddles of man and of the world, which only appear in the spiritual world itself, will be solved.

A special riddle is everything that we experience in the form of destiny, between birth and death — everything we experience in the form of *destiny*. This

word contains many, many things. In our public lecture [“Man’s Soul and Body from the Standpoint of Spiritual Science”, delivered on the 23rd of October, 1916.] we have already explained that a certain amount of light can be thrown upon the question of destiny if we consider the repeated lives on earth. But these are more general points of view. It is also possible to draw attention to more concrete connections. Let us assume, for instance, that a person has lost a dear relative. This relative was comparatively young when he died, so that the one who remained behind had to pass through a considerably long stretch of life upon the earth without him. We can see immediately that if we face a similar thought, something rises up before our spiritual eye which must constitute a problem of destiny for many people. We must now bear in mind the fact that spiritual science is really in a position to throw light upon such problems of destiny. Undoubtedly, every case has its individual aspect. But just the spiritual-scientific study of individual cases can give us a certain insight into the mysterious processes of human life.

We can, for instance, make the following experience: Someone has died in his young years, he has been torn away from his relatives. I have already explained

to you that through the fact that human beings enter into relationship with one another through their physical bodies, other connections arise, which are far more encompassing than those which are dependent upon our existence within a physical body. A far greater sphere of connections arises if we live ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years with another person, a far greater sphere of forces develops than those which arise between these two human beings in the physical world. If we turn the clairvoyant gaze upon these connections, we shall discover in many cases that the other relationships which thus arise are of such a kind that through their own inner nature they necessarily demand the continuation resulting from the loss, both as regards the person who has remained behind in the physical world, and the one who has passed through the portal of death into the other world, the spiritual world. The one who has remained behind must bear the loss. In an abstract way, we might say that he has lost a beloved human being, who has vanished from his sight at a time when he never thought of losing him. Perhaps this loss may have rent asunder hopes of a future life in common, here, in the physical world; plans and hopes for the future may have been destroyed. These experiences form part of life; but they also form part of all the experiences in common which we are able to have within the physical body.

The fact that grief and sorrow are added to the experiences which we have shared with a departed friend changes the relationships which could only be developed through the fact that we have both lived in a physical body. Just as our daily experiences, the experiences we have when we face one another in our physical bodies, flow into the stream of karma, into the progressive stream of evolution, so the feelings arising from our impressions of grief and sorrow are added to what we have experienced day by day. All the impressions and feelings which we experience in this way are added to the experiences which we have made during our life in a physical body. This is seen from the standpoint of the one who remains behind, in the physical world.

One who has passed over into the spiritual world, has a somewhat different standpoint. His association with those whom he has left behind will not diminish through the fact that he has gone into the spiritual world. Indeed, those who are really able to investigate the spiritual worlds in connection with such concrete cases will realize that the one who is on the other side has a more intensive connection with the souls who have remained behind, a more intimate connection than was the case during the life in a physical body. Frequently we see that this more intimate connection

arises in order to complete in the right way the circle of reciprocal connections which has been formed here, in the physical world. If we investigate things in a really positive way we shall often make the following discovery: We shall see how human beings come together here, in the physical world; below the threshold of consciousness this gives rise to a certain sphere of interests connected with their reciprocal relationships. Had these people remained together in the physical world for a longer time, the connection arising from the karma-foundation of their preceding lives could not have been deepened with sufficient intensity. In many cases, the person who has passed through the portal of death brings about this deepening required by karma. He brings it about while the souls who are intimately connected with him still dwell upon the earth, and through the fact that he is united with them in thoughts, that he penetrates into them and streams through them, he can now bring about this deepening required by karma, which could not have been brought about by the life-conditions which would have arisen had he not passed through the portal of death. A true fulfilment of karma is often connected with the fact that, on the one hand, grief and sorrow must be borne on earth, while, on the other hand, more intensive connections are established with the thoughts of those who have remained behind.

If we now trace the path of the person who has remained behind, if we see him passing through the portal of death some time afterwards and if we follow his relationship with the one who has died before him, we shall discover another thing. We shall see that many things change in accordance with the difference of time between the two departed ones. When we enter the spiritual world it is not an indifferent matter to discover there, for instance, a person who has died contemporaneously with us (let us take this extreme case), or, let us say, fifteen years sooner. The fact that he has spent a certain period of time in the spiritual world and that the experiences through which he has passed are now contained in the soul we encounter, will bring about another influence, it will influence us differently and tie the karmic link in a corresponding way. Had the circumstances been different, the karmic link would have been tied in a different way. Thus, everything we experience with the souls who are closely related with us must be looked upon altogether as experiences which are based upon our karmic connection with them. And even though grief and sorrow cannot diminish through the knowledge of these facts and of the way in which they interpenetrate and interweave (I have often mentioned this), we must, nevertheless say that, seen from a certain standpoint, human life viewed in this

way begins to acquire a true significance. For we must bear in mind that during our life between death and a new birth every situation into which we are placed unfolds in such a way that justice is done not only to this one life, but also to everything which we must contribute to the evolution of the earth during our succeeding lives on earth. What has begun with the sorrow we have felt in losing a relative, a friend, or some other person closely connected with us, continues, and this continuation appears in the next life on earth. In a certain respect, every result or effect is already contained in the first cause. There is no loss in human life which does not place us in a corresponding way into the stream of the successive lives on earth. This may perhaps not soothe our pain in single cases, but if we view things from this angle we shall be able to draw knowledge out of life.

Another concrete case which I should like to mention (particularly these concrete cases can teach us many things if we are able to discuss these questions in a continuous way) is that of a man whose life has ended suddenly through some accident. From the very beginning we feel that there must be a great difference between a man who loses his life through an accident, by being run over by a train, or through some other cause coming from outside, through some

other form of violent death, and a man who attains a great age before he dies, or one whose life reaches its close through illness. We also surmise that there must be a difference between a life which ends very soon through illness, and a life which terminates after having attained a great age.

Of course, the details differ for every individual case, but on the whole we may observe certain important points which throw light on these things. Let us ask, above everything, what is violent death? This question can only be answered if we do not contemplate death from the standpoint of our physical life upon the earth, but from the other side, from the standpoint of one who has already passed through the portal of death. In my lectures (some of these have already been published [See "Man's Inner Being and His Life Between Death and a New Birth," Lectures delivered in Vienna, Easter, 1914.]), I have mentioned the fact, that death viewed from the other side, from the world which the dead person enters when passing through the threshold of death, is the most significant event of all, the event which continually reveals to the deceased man, who is deprived of his body, that life's victories never cease. The direct contemplation of death from the other side, this lofty, great and uninterrupted sight, also brings with it a firm Ego-

consciousness during our existence between death and a new birth. Just as our memory supplies us with an Ego-consciousness in this life by leading us back to a certain definite moment of our physical life, so the contemplation of death from the other side, from the spiritual side, gives us our Ego-consciousness between death and a new birth.

How do matters stand if the contemplation of death is brought about by the circumstance that a violent and sudden end of life has caused death? Seen from the other side, a sudden and violent death is a far-reaching experience, a far-reaching perception, and, although this may sound strange, an investigation of these facts reveals the following: When we enter the spiritual worlds through the portal of death the conditions of time have a different influence upon our soul-experiences than here upon the earth, although there are many conditions here which can remind us of what takes place in a far more encompassing way between death and a new birth. When trying to explain the chief things which should be borne in mind in this connection, I shall make use of a comparison which is evident, however, only if we know the corresponding facts pertaining to the spiritual world.

Perhaps you know that in our physical life we can often make experiences in the course of a few days or hours, experiences which mean to us far more than those we otherwise make in the course of months and even of years. Many people can remember some important event of their life which they have experienced here in the physical world in a very short time, yet this event may have given them a greater amount of inner experience, greater results of inner experience, than the events of whole months or years. People often express this by saying: "I shall never forget what I have experienced in that particular case." These plain words often contain what I have just characterized. Now it is a fact that the impression which the human being receives owing to the circumstance that an external world, a world which does not belong to him, robs him of his physical body, that the perception which he obtains through this event in a comparatively brief time — it may even be a moment — comprises, during the life between death and a new birth, a whole wealth of experiences which are otherwise gained during the slow course of an earthly life, experiences through which we would perhaps have passed during the course of many years and decades. I do not mean that it comprises everything we have experienced during an earthly life; but in the case of certain forces which we need

during our life between death and a new birth it is indeed so that things which may otherwise be spread over a longer period of time are concentrated, drawn together, we may even say in the space of a single moment.

It is an entirely different experience to see, in our subconsciousness, death approaching in such a way that inner forces come to the fore which bring about death from within the human organism, or in such a way that forces which are in no way connected with the human organism have an influence upon it. This kind of death can only be explained in a true and genuine way if we consider it in connection with the whole course of human life through the repeated lives on earth. In fact, my explanations in connection with Ego-consciousness after death and the contemplation of death may easily show you that the perception of death itself has a great significance for the strength and intensity of our Ego-consciousness between death and a new birth.

Circumstances which seen from the angle of physical life appear as a coincidence are not at all a coincidence, but they form part of a world of necessary happenings. From the earthly standpoint it may seem a coincidence that someone has been run

over by a train; seen from the other side, the spiritual side, this does not appear as a coincidence. If from the other side, from the spiritual side, we ask the following question (let me use this expression, which is of course only a comparison), “What is the aspect of such a violent death when viewed within the whole complex of man’s lives upon the earth?” — we shall find in every case that in past epochs of the repeated lives on earth and of the intermediate lives between death and a new birth the person who has suffered a violent death has developed up to the moment of his accident in regard to the spiritual world an Ego-consciousness which needed a strengthening, an intensification. And the required strengthening is produced because this man’s physical life is not brought to a close from within, but from without.

We must reckon with the fact that the connexions with the environing world which are produced in the soul through thought forces are not the only ones, for as a rule, we are only aware in very exceptional cases of the way in which our subconsciousness thinks. You have often heard me say that our thinking activity does not end with the threshold of consciousness, for the human being has an incessant thought activity in his subconsciousness, or we might also say, in his super-consciousness. But the human being cannot in

any way realise what this more encompassing form of consciousness really means to him. We could ask each person: "Why have you not met with this or with that accident this morning?" For it would have been possible in the case of every person to have met with some accident. Sometimes we realise to a certain extent how matters stand, but we are very seldom able to see the whole connexion. Sometimes we may feel an aversion to do a certain thing; we may leave home, for instance, half an hour later, and afterwards we may discover that in the meantime an accident has occurred along the way, an accident we would have met with had we left half an hour sooner. In this case our subconsciousness has been active, our subconsciousness has made us loiter. These subconscious influences are always there, but generally we cannot perceive them.

Those who can observe the conditions of the world from the spiritual standpoint are fully aware that a man who is about to meet with an accident and whose good genius, I might say, does not guard him against this accident, that this man who meets with an accident is driven to it by the necessity of his karma. Had this accident not taken place, something else, too, would not have taken place, namely, what I have characterized as the required strengthening of his

Ego-consciousness, which must be brought about in the described manner. During a particular life upon the earth the human being enters through birth the particular conditions into which he is placed. He enters these conditions, but during his last existence between death and a new birth he has observed that his Ego is in a certain way weak, that it lacks strength. He is filled with the impulse to strengthen his Ego, and this leads him into the circumstances which bring about his accident. This is how we must view things. And if we consider it from the standpoint of a spiritual-scientific knowledge we shall see the true connexions of life.

I have often emphasized that men do not consider sufficiently the changes which have recently taken place in the development of the human soul. Most people, particularly those who are infested with modern learning, think that many centuries ago human soul-life was exactly the same as now. This is quite wrong. The more intimate side of soul-life has undergone a change, its character and attitude have changed completely. What spiritual science must again bring to the surface from certain sources for the sake of a better understanding of life, as already explained, shows us that not so very long ago the souls of men possessed a more atavistic and

clairvoyant character. The human beings were able to feel, as it were, the connexions of life. But humanity progresses and similar feelings die out. Seeing that during the course of evolution man has in part lost his former relationship with the spiritual world and that he is losing it more, and more, it will become an ever growing necessity for him to regain a knowledge of his connexion with the spiritual world through direct spiritual investigation. This is also connected with the fact that spiritual science arises just at the present time. In earlier times it was not needed, because the human soul had not reached its present stage of development. For the reasons explained above, spiritual science will be needed from now onward, and in future it will become more and more necessary.

Let us corroborate this statement with certain concrete facts. To-day there is only a small number of men who accept spiritual science during their life between birth and death. I do not say, spiritual *research*, but spiritual *science* — thoughts and ideas supplied by spiritual science. Thus they learn something about the spiritual world during their life between birth and death. This is not without a significance for the life which we enter after passing through the portal of death.

The fact which I shall explain to you now has also arisen in our present time. When we revert to earlier times we find that man still possessed an old inheritance in regard to his connexion with the spiritual world. Man passed through the portal of death and because he had a certain relationship with the spiritual world through his feelings, through an atavistic clairvoyance and similar experiences, his life in a physical body had something in common with the life which he entered through the portal of death. Because man knew something about the spiritual world (although this was only an instinctive knowledge) he possessed *more* than a mere sum of thoughts reminding him of his life on earth after having passed through the portal of death. From now onwards it will be characteristic of human souls to pass through the portal of death in such a way that they will be connected with the earth only through their memories. They remember as it were, their earthly life, and they are still connected with it because after death this earthly life lives in their memory. This is strictly and radically speaking the case of a modern man who cannot take up ideas concerning the spiritual world from spiritual science. If he takes up these ideas, they will form something after death enabling him, not only to remember his earthly life, but also to have an insight into it. The spiritual

ideas we take up before death change into faculties after death. After death windows open, as it were, from the spiritual world into the physical world, and they reveal what exists in the physical world because here upon the earth we have acquired thoughts connected with the spiritual world. Spiritual science, therefore, enables us to take with us certain definite results when we cross [the] threshold of death.

What we acquire through spiritual science is not merely a lifeless store of knowledge, but a real treasure of life, something which continues to live when we pass through the portal of death. Indeed, spiritual science is a great life-treasure, also in the meaning which I have explained to you on various occasions and because the dead person lives in our thoughts consciously and of his own accord, we are able to do something for the dead owing to the fact that we have taken up spiritual science. This is also connected with the explanations which I have frequently given in regard to reading to the dead. The dead friend lives in our thoughts; he looks upon our thoughts. If these thoughts are of the kind resulting from a spiritual-scientific train of thoughts, or if we tell him something we know or think in connection with the spiritual worlds, the dead unites himself with the thoughts which we send out to him from the earth

through spiritual science. This focusing of our thoughts upon him forms the link between here and beyond and constitutes the force of attraction. Because spiritual science is filled with life, a living force can, as it were, be sent upwards, and this is nourishment for the dead person who is connected with us.

We see, therefore, that spiritual science really overcomes death in this soul-manner and that it penetrates into life. A community of living and dead, which otherwise cannot exist at the present time in such an intensive form, is established because here upon earth we are filled with thoughts taken from spiritual science, and because we offer these thoughts, as it were, to the dead and turn toward them.

Spiritual science has, in every way, a living influence upon life, whereas the knowledge which is acquired throughout the physical world in the form of ordinary science consists of thoughts which have a real significance only during the time between birth and death. During the life after death they only have the value of memories and do not possess a living influence. This difference should be borne in mind clearly.

Something else should also be considered when reflecting on the significance of spiritual science for the present and for the future spiritual evolution of man. Not only what we acquire here as spiritual science and transmit to the dead, not only that which passes from the physical into the spiritual world, but also what we bring with us through the portal of death in the form of acquirements gained through spiritual knowledge reacts from the spiritual world on the earthly sphere. The earthly sphere — we should not lose sight of this fact — is gradually impoverished through the forces coming from the earth itself, forces which men develop as they pass through their life between birth and death. Earthly life would grow poor if no other forces were to stream down upon the earth from the spiritual world except those which have so far descended upon it.

At the present time it is disheartening to see how thoughtlessly people live, without noticing the gradual impoverishment of earthly existence. This is a phenomenon which can be observed not only in regard to man's spiritual life, not only in regard to culture, but also in regard to the densest aspect of physical life upon the earth. In Eduard Suess's excellent book, *The Countenance of the Earth*, you can read that once upon a time the earth presented a

different aspect: its physical surface was different. The earth has undergone, as it were, a slow death-process as far as its surface is concerned, for this surface of the earth, the ordinary, physical surface of the earth, no longer contains the same forces as in ages long past.

What takes place in physical life also takes place in spiritual life. As already stated, it is often disheartening to see how people confront this without being aware of it. As far as spiritual life is concerned it is so that when we describe the path which is trodden by humanity we must say: In spite of the pride pervading our present time it appears that man's thoughts grow more and more lifeless, more and more dead, and even more and more disconnected. Modern men are naturally very proud of their thinking ... indeed, many a teacher of Greek thinks that he is far greater than Plato when he explains Plato to his pupils! Hebbel, the profound poet, wrote in his notebook (but he did not carry out his plan) that he intended to write a drama, with the reincarnated Plato as chief character, and that this Plato is severely punished by his teacher because he cannot understand Plato during a Greek lesson! Man would, in a certain way, lose the continuity of his thought-system if this thought-system were not refreshed by thoughts born out of spiritual-scientific knowledge. It

may sound strange to-day, nevertheless it is true: the intensive force which man needs in order to grasp his thoughts in the right way, so that they acquire reality, this force grows powerless because man must become independent, he must acquire forces of his own. For this reason (I can express it in this way), the gods and the spiritual beings who have once inspired man's thoughts, his connected train of thoughts, withdraw, and man must now independently bring into his thoughts a living element. He will do this only if he is not too proud to take up within him that life which flows out of spiritual science.

With our feelings and with the impulses of our will it is the same as with our thoughts. These human impulses of volition will, for instance, grow more and more obstinate and self-willed (we may really use this expression), they will gradually separate themselves from the common element of humanity unless the soul is inoculated with the great, encompassing impulses which can only arise out of a contemplation of the spiritual connexion of physical things. I have now expressed truths which have a great weight in the evolution of man's future, but these truths should become united with the souls of those who occupy themselves with spiritual science. For spiritual science should not only be a lifeless store of knowledge

satisfying our curiosity, but spiritual science should be something which seeks to penetrate into the connexion of the things which man must face in the future. In order to attain to this it will be necessary to have an insight enabling us to see the systems of forces which are gradually becoming paralysed and those which should be substituted by others. I have said that man's earthly forces would become paralysed if no help comes from the spiritual worlds. What we acquire through a spiritual-scientific knowledge and bear with us through the portal of death, gives us, between death and a new birth, not only the power to mould our life during the time between death and a new birth, but also the power allowing spiritual forces to descend upon the earth. This will have to take place in a growing measure, so that the human beings who live upon the earth may receive the forces descending from the souls who are penetrated with the spirit, souls who have passed through the portal of death and who send back what they have taken with them from the earth, but in a changed form, according to what has taken place through the fact that their life-experiences have entered the spiritual worlds.

One way of sending influences from the physical into the spiritual world is to work for the dead by

reading to them, by sending them thoughts connected with spiritual science. Similarly there is also a way of contributing something toward the physical enrichment of the earth's evolution by sending down from the Spiritual world what we have acquired during our abode in the physical world and have carried into the spiritual world by passing through the portal of death. A peculiarity to be borne in mind is that the physical world can again receive things which have acquired a changed aspect through the fact that they constitute a spiritual wealth which we have gained during our physical life and which we have carried through the portal of death. In the spiritual world it has undergone a metamorphosis and then it streams down again in this changed form.

As far as we ourselves are concerned, we always work upon our karma so that it fulfils itself between birth and death. But we also work upon the karma of mankind as a whole, and this karma consists of the life-stream flowing off from the earth and of the life-stream flowing in from the spiritual world. We also work upon this entire world-karma with the aid of forces which we develop between death and a new birth over and above our own requirement. We can therefore see how necessary spiritual science really is, how necessary it is that spiritual science should be

taken up and digested by human souls, not only for the welfare of individual human souls, but also for the welfare of the entire progress of humanity here upon the earth. In my public lecture I have already explained how we work from the spiritual world upon our future life on earth. The way in which we gradually enter before birth into hereditary conditions through the stream of the generations, and how we participate not only in that which concerns us individually during a future life on earth, but also in that which concerns humanity as a whole — these thoughts which I now utter, these particularly are thoughts which should penetrate into us and live in us, thoughts which should — I might say — be *meditated*. For they place us into a living spirit and soul-connexion with the environing world.

As a counterpart, I wish to show you the attitude which is still being adopted by the world in regard to the things which are revealed particularly to spiritual science, and how the world adopts a standpoint which would necessarily bring about what I have characterized as a drying-out of thoughts, as a lack of continuity, a lack of connexion in human thoughts. And corresponding things would appear in other spheres. Particularly those who are now the leaders in this or in that sphere contribute in a direct way,

through their arrogant rejection of every connexion with the spiritual world as transmitted by spiritual science, to the realization of this grievous situation, the approach of which can already be seen to-day, particularly in regard to the world of thoughts.

4. On the Connection of the Living and the Dead

It is one of the aims of our spiritual-scientific endeavour to form concrete ideas of how we, as human beings upon earth, live with the spiritual worlds, even as we are connected through the physical body — its experiences and perceptions — with the physical world.

At the present stage of our studies we may well take our start from what is already known to us — what has already come before our souls during these years. Here, for instance, is the world of our sense-perceptions, the world to which we direct our will-impulses for which the physical body mediates — that is to say, our actions. Immediately behind it, as you know, there is the elemental world. That is the next world behind this one. It is not a question of the name; we might have named it differently. To gain clear and living ideas of these super-sensible worlds we must at least enter into some of their peculiarities. We must try to recognize what they are for us as human beings. For in truth our whole life between birth and death — and also our subsequent life which takes its course between death and a new birth — depends on our co-existence with the various worlds that are spread out

around us. We call the 'elemental world' that world which can only be perceived by what we know as 'imaginations.' Hence we may also call it the 'imaginative world.' In ordinary human life, under ordinary conditions, man cannot lift into consciousness his imaginative perceptions — his perceptions of the elemental world. Not that the imaginations are not there, or that in any given moment of our sleeping or waking life we are not in relation to the elemental world, receiving imaginations from it. On the contrary, imaginations are perpetually ebbing and flowing in us. Though we are unaware of it, we constantly receive impressions from the elemental world. Just as when we open our eyes or lend our ears to the outer world we have sensations of colour and light, perceptions of sound, so do we receive continual impressions from the elemental world, giving rise to imaginations — in this case, in our etheric body. Imaginations differ from ordinary thought in this respect. In ordinary, every-day human thoughts, only the head is concerned as an instrument of conscious assimilation and experience. In our imaginations, on the other hand, we partake with almost the whole of our organism — albeit, it is our etheric organism. In our etheric organism they are constantly taking place — we may refer to them as unconscious imaginations, since it is only for an occultly trained cognition that

they rise into consciousness. Moreover, though they do not enter our consciousness directly in every-day life, they are by no means without significance for us. No, for our life as a whole they are far more important than our sense-perceptions, for we are united far more intensely and intimately with our imaginations than with our sense-perceptions.

From the mineral kingdom, as physical human beings, we receive few imaginations. We receive more through all that we develop by living with the plant-world and with the animal. But the greater part, by far, of what lives as imaginations in our etheric body is due to our relations to our fellow human beings, and all that these relations entail for our life as a whole. In fact, our whole relation to our fellow human beings — our whole attitude towards them — is fundamentally based on imaginations. Imaginations always result from the way we meet another human being, and though, as I said, to ordinary consciousness they do not appear as imaginations, nevertheless they make themselves felt in the sympathies and antipathies which play such an overwhelming part in our life. To a greater or lesser degree, we develop sympathies and antipathies with all that approaches us as human beings in this world. We have our vague undefined feelings, slight inclinations or disinclinations.

Sometimes our sympathies grow into friendship and love — love which can be so enhanced that we think we can no longer live without this or that human being. All this is due to the imaginations which are perpetually called forth, in our etheric body, by our life with our fellow human beings. In fact we always carry with us in life something that cannot quite be called memory — for it is far more real than memory. We bear within us — shall we say — these enhanced memories or imaginations which we have received from all the impressions of the human beings with who we have ever been, and which we go on receiving all the time. We bear them within us, and they constitute a goodly portion of what we call our inner life. I mean not the inner life that lives in clear, well-defined memories, but that inner life which makes itself felt in our prevailing mood and feeling and outlook — our outlook on the world itself, or on our own life in the world. We would go past the world around us coldly and we would live with our contemporary world indifferently if we did not unfold this imaginative life by living together with other beings — and notably with other human beings.

It is, as we might say, our soul's interest in the surrounding world which makes itself felt in this way. It belongs especially to the elemental world, and notably

to our own etheric body. It is, above all, inherent in the forces of our etheric body, and it makes itself felt in this way. Sometimes we feel ourselves immediately 'caught' and interested. Such interest as is often woven from the very first moment between one human being and another is due to definite relationships which arise between the one — the one etheric human being — and the other, bringing about the play of imaginations hither and thither. We live with these imaginations and with our resulting sympathies, of whose effect and intensity we are often largely unaware, or aware only in the vaguest way. Indeed, when our everyday life is not wide-awake but runs along more or less obtusely, we often fail to observe them at all.

We belong with all this to the elemental world, for it is out of the elemental world that we have our own etheric body. Our etheric body is our instrument of communication with the elemental world. With it, however, we do not only spin out relationships to those other etheric bodies which belong to physical beings. We are also related with our etheric body to spiritual beings of an elemental character. The 'beings of an elemental character' are precisely those who are able to call forth in us imaginations — conscious or unconscious. We are perpetually related to a multitude

of elemental beings. It is in this that one human being differs from another. They have their several relationships — one person to a given set of elemental beings, another to another set of elemental beings. Moreover, the relations of the one human being to certain elemental beings may sometimes coincide with the relations of the other to the same beings. One thing, however, must be observed in this connection. While we are always, in a manner of speaking, akin to a large number of elemental beings, we have relations of special intensity to one elemental being, who is in essence the counterpart of our own etheric body. Our own etheric body is intimately related to one particular etheric being. Just as our etheric body — what we call our etheric body from birth until death — develops its own relations to the physical world inasmuch as it is inserted in a physical body, so does this etheric entity, which is as it were the counterpart or counter-pole of our own etheric body, enable us to have relations to the whole of the elemental world — the whole of the surrounding, cosmic-elemental world.

We gaze upon an elemental world to which we ourselves belong by virtue of our etheric body, and with which we stand in manifold relations — specific relationships to such and such elemental beings. In the elemental world we make acquaintance with

beings who are truly no less real than human beings or animals in the physical — beings, however, who never come to incarnation, but only to ‘etherization,’ so to speak, for their densest corporeality is ethereal. Just as we go about among physical people in this world, so do we constantly go about among such elemental beings, while other elemental beings — more remote from ourselves — are related in their turn to other people. A certain number, however, are more nearly related to ourselves, and one among them — related to us most nearly of all — acts as our organ of communication with the entire cosmic-elemental world. Now in the time immediately following our passage through the Gate of Death, when for a few days we still bear our etheric body with us, we ourselves become precisely such a being as these elemental beings are. In a manner of speaking, we ourselves become an elemental being. We have often described this process of the passage through the Gate of Death, but the more exactly we study it, the clearer the imaginations it provides. For the impressions we receive immediately after the passage of a human being through the Gate of Death always consist in imaginations — make themselves felt as imaginations.

Observing the process more exactly, we find that there is a certain mutual interplay, immediately after death, between our own etheric body and its etheric counterpart. The fact that our etheric body is taken from us a few days after death is mainly due to its being attracted — drawn in, as it were — by this etheric counterpart. Henceforth it becomes one with the etheric counterpart. A few days after death we do in fact lay aside our etheric body, we hand it over, so to speak; but it is to our own etheric counterpart that we hand it over. Our etheric body is taken from us by our own cosmic prototype or image and, as a result, special relations now emerge between what is thus taken from us and the other elemental beings with whom we have been related in any way during our life. We might describe it thus: a kind of mutual relation now arises between what our own etheric body has become — united as it now is with its counterpart or counter-image — and the other elemental beings who accompanied us from birth till death. It might be compared to the relation of a sun to its associated planetary system. Our etheric body with its cosmic counterpart is like a kind of sun, surrounded — as a kind of planetary system — by the other elemental beings. This mutual interplay gives rise to the forces which instill into the elemental world — in the right manner and in slow evolution — what our etheric body

is able to take into that world. That which we commonly refer to in abstract terms — ‘the dissolution of the etheric body’ — is essentially a play of forces, engendered by this sun-planetary system which we have left behind. Gradually, what we acquired and assimilated to our etheric body in the course of life becomes a part of the spiritual world. It weaves itself into the forces of the spiritual world. We must be very clear on this. Every thought, every idea, every feeling we develop — however hidden it remains — is of significance for the spiritual world. For when the coherence is broken by our passage through the Gate of Death, all our thoughts and feelings pass with our etheric body into the spiritual world and become part and parcel of it. We do not live for nothing. Even as we receive them into the thoughts we make our own, into the feelings we experience, so are the fruits of our life embodied in the cosmos. This is a truth we must receive into our whole mood and outlook; otherwise we do not rightly conduct ourselves in the spiritual-scientific movement. You are not a spiritual scientist merely by knowing about certain things. You are so only if you feel yourself, by virtue of this knowledge, within the spiritual world; if you know yourself quite definitely as a member in the spiritual world. Then you will say to yourself: the thought you are now harbouring is of significance for the entire universe,

for at your death it will be handed over to the universe in such or such a form.

Now after a human being's death we may have to do, in one form or another, with what is thus handed over to the universe. Many of the ways in which the dead are present to those whom they have left behind are due to the fact that the etheric human being — which has, of course, been laid aside by the real individuality — sends back his imaginations to the living. And if the living person is sensitive enough, or if he is in some abnormal state or has normally prepared himself by proper spiritual training, the influences of what is thus given over to the spiritual world by the dead — the influences, that is to say, of imaginative natures — can emerge in him in a conscious form.

But there still remains a connection after death between the true human individuality and this etheric entity which has separated from him. There is a mutual interplay between them. We can observe it most clearly when by spiritual training we come into actual intercourse with this *or* that dead individual. A certain kind of intercourse can then take place, as follows: to begin with, the dead human being conveys to his etheric body what he himself wishes to transmit

to us who are still in the physical world. For only by his transmitting it to his etheric body — as it were, making inscriptions in his etheric body — only by this means can we, who are here in the physical, have perceptions of the dead in terms of what we call ‘imaginations.’ The moment we have imaginations of him, the etheric body of the dead — if you will pardon my use of the trivial and all too realistic term — is acting as a ‘switch’ or ‘commutator.’ Do not imagine that our relations to the dead need be any the less deeply felt because such an instrument is needed. A person who meets us in the outer world also conveys his form to us by the picture which he calls forth in us through our own eyes. So it is with this transmission through the etheric body. We perceive what the dead wishes to convey to us by ‘getting’ it, so to speak, via his etheric body. This body is outside him, but he is so intimately related to it that he can inscribe in it what lives within himself, and thus enable us to read it in imaginations. There is, however, this condition. If a person who is spiritually trained wishes to come into connection with a dead human being through the etheric body in this way, he must have entered into some relation to the dead — either in his last life between birth and death, or out of former incarnations. Moreover, these relationships must have affected his soul — the soul of the one who is still

living here — deeply enough for the imaginations to make an impression on him. For this can only be if in his heart and mind he had a definite and living interest in the dead person. Interests of heart and feeling must always be the mediator between the living and the dead, if any intercourse at all is to take place — conscious or unconscious. (Of the latter we shall speak presently.) Some interest of heart and feeling must be there, so that we really carry something of the dead within us. In a certain respect at any rate the dead person must have constituted a portion of our own soul's experience. Only one who is spiritually trained can make himself a certain substitute. For instance — (it may seem external at first sight, but spiritual training turns it into something far more inward) — one can give oneself up to the impression of the handwriting, or of something else in which the individuality of the dead is living. However, one can only do so if one has acquired a certain practice in making contact with an individuality through the fact that he lives in the writing. Or again, one may establish this possibility by entering with sympathy into the feelings of the physical survivors, partaking in their grief and in all the emotional interest they have in the dead person. By entering with sympathy into these real and living feelings, which flow from the dead into the dear ones whom he

has left on Earth — or which remain in their inner life — a person of spiritual training can prepare his soul to read in the aforesaid imaginations.

But we must also realize the following. Though to perceive the imaginations which play over from the etheric body depends on spiritual training or other special conditions, yet at the same time what passes unperceived by people is there none the less. And we may truly say, those who are living in the physical world are not only woven around by the elemental forces, as imaginations, which proceed from other human beings living with them in the physical body. Whether we know it or not, our etheric body is constantly played-through by all the imaginations which we absorb from those who stood in any kind of relation to us and who passed before us through the Gate of Death. As in our physical life, in the physical body, we are related to the air around us, so are we related to the whole of the elemental world — including all that is there of the dead.

We shall never learn to know our human life unless we gain knowledge of these relationships, albeit they are so intimate and fine that they remain unnoticed by most people. After all, who can deny that we do not always remain the same between birth and death. Let

us look back upon our lives. However consistent we may think the course of life has been, we will soon notice that we have often gone hither and thither in life, or that this or that has occurred. Even if this does not immediately change the direction of our lives, which it can of course do, it nonetheless has the effect of enriching our lives in one way or another — in a happy direction or in a painful one. It brings us into different conditions — just as when you go into another district your general feeling of health may be changed by the different composition of the air.

These moods of soul, into which we enter in our life's course, are due to the influences of the elemental world, and in no small measure to the influences that come from the dead who were formerly related to us. Many a human being in earthly life meets with a friend or with some person with whom he becomes connected in one way or another — to whom, perhaps, he finds himself obliged to do this or that by way of kindness or of criticism or rebuke. The fact that they were brought together required the influence of certain forces. He who recognizes the occult connections in the world knows that when two human beings are brought together to this end or that, sometimes one and sometimes several of those who have gone before them through the Gate of Death are

instrumental. Our life does not become any the less free thereby. We do not lose our freedom because we starve if we do not eat. No one who is not deliberately foolish will say: how can a person be free, seeing that he is obliged to eat? It would be just as invalid to say that we become unfree because our soul constantly receives influences from the elemental world as here described. Indeed, just as we are connected with warmth and cold, with all the things that become our food and with the air around us, so are we connected with that which comes to us from those who have died before us. We are equally connected with the rest of the elemental world, but above all with that which comes to us from them, and we can truly say: man's working for his fellow human beings does not cease with his passage through the Gate of Death. Through his etheric body, with which he himself remains connected, he sends his imaginations into those with whom he was connected in his life. Indeed, the world to which we are here referring is far more real than that we commonly call real — even if, in our every-day life, for very good reasons, it remains unperceived. So much, for today, about the *elemental world*.

A further realm which is ever present in our environment, and to which we ourselves belong no less than to the elemental world, is the *soul world* — for

so we may call it. (It is not the name that matters.) With the elemental world we are always connected in our waking life, and in sleep, too, indirectly, when with our ego and astral body we are outside the physical and the etheric; when our body that lies there in the bed, and our etheric body, are still connected with the elemental world. But with the higher world to which I now refer, we are connected most directly — only that this too cannot rise into our consciousness in ordinary life. We are connected with it in sleep when we have our astral body freely around us, and also in waking life — albeit then the connection, mediated as it is by forces which the physical body has drawn into itself, is no longer so direct.

Now in this world-of-soul (let us call it the soul world for the present; medieval philosophers referred to it as the heavenly world or the celestial) in this world, once more, we find beings who are just as real as we are during our life between birth and death, nay, more so. They are, however, beings who do not need to come to embodiment in a physical, or even in an etheric, body. They live — as in their lowest corporeality — in that which we are wont to call the astral body. Constantly, during our life and after our death, we are connected intimately with a large number of these purely astral beings. Here, too, human beings differ from one

another inasmuch as they are related to different astral beings — albeit, here again, two people may have their relationships to one or more astral beings in common, while at the same time each of them has his several relations to other astral beings.

It is to this world, in which these astral beings are, that we ourselves belong from the time when, after passing through the Gate of Death, we have laid aside our etheric body. We with our own individuality are then among the beings of the soul world. We are such beings at that time, and beings of the soul world are our immediate environment. True, we are also related to the content of the elemental world, inasmuch as we can kindle in it that which calls forth imaginations as aforesaid. We have, however, the elemental world in a certain sense outside us — or, as one might also say, beneath us. It is a portion of which we rather make use for purposes of communication with the remainder of the world, while we ourselves belong directly to what I have now called the world-of-soul. It is with the beings of the soul world that we have our intercourse, including other human beings who have also passed through the Gate of Death and, after a few days, laid aside their etheric bodies.

Now just as we constantly get influences from the elemental world, although we do not notice it, so too we constantly receive influences — straight into our astral body — out of this world-of-soul which I am now describing. It is only the immediate, straightforward influences which we thus receive that can appear as inspirations. (Of the indirect influences via the etheric body we have already spoken.) You will understand the character of such an influence from the soul world if I describe once more in a few words how it appears to one who is spiritually trained — one who is able to receive conscious inspirations out of the spiritual world. It appears to him as follows. He can only bring these inspirations to his consciousness if he is able, so to speak, to take into himself some portion of the being who wants to inspire him — some portion of the qualities, of the inherent tendency in life, of such a being.

One who is spiritually trained to develop conscious relations with a dead person, not only via the etheric body but in this direct way through inspiration, must bear in his soul even more than mere interest or sympathy is able to call forth. For a short while, at least, he must be so able to transform himself as to receive into his own being something of the habits, the character, the very human nature of the one with

whom he wishes to communicate. He must be able to enter into him till he can truly say to himself, 'I am taking on his habits to such an extent that I could do what he could, and in his way; that I could feel as he could, and will as he could, also.' It is the 'could' that matters — the possibility. We must, therefore, be able to live together with the dead even more intimately. For a person of spiritual training there are many ways of coming thus near to the dead, provided the dead person himself allows it. We should, however, realize that the beings who belong to what we are now calling the world-of-soul are quite differently related to the world than we are in our physical body. Hence there are certain conditions, quite definite conditions, of intercourse with such beings — and, among others, with the dead, so long as they are living still as astral beings in their astral bodies. We may draw attention especially to certain points.

You see, all that we develop for our life in the physical body — our many and varied relationships to other people (I mean precisely those relationships which arise through earthly life) — all this acquires quite another kind of interest for the dead. Here on the earth we develop sympathies and antipathies. Let us be fully clear on this. Such sympathies and antipathies as we develop while we are living in the

physical body are subject to the influences of this our present form of life, which we owe to the physical body and to its conditions. They are subject to the influences of our own vanity and of our egoism. Let us not fail to realize how many relationships we develop to this or that human being as a result of vanity or egoism — or other things that depend on our physical and earthly life in this world. We love other people or we hate them. Verily, as a rule, we take little notice of the true grounds of our loving and our hating — our sympathies and antipathies. Nay, often enough we flee from taking conscious notice of our sympathies and antipathies, for the simple reason that, if we did so, highly unpleasant truths would as a rule emerge. If, for instance, we followed up the real facts which find expression in our not loving this or that human being, we should often have to ascribe to ourselves so much of prejudice or vanity or other qualities that we are afraid to do so. Therefore we do not bring to full clarity in consciousness why it is that we hate this person or that. And with love, too, the case is often similar. Interests, sympathies and antipathies evolve in this way, which only have significance for our everyday life. Yet it is out of all this that we act. We arrange our life according to these interests and sympathies and antipathies.

Now it would be quite wrong to imagine that the dead can possibly have the same interest as we earthly people have in all the ephemeral sympathies and antipathies which thus arise under the influence of our physical and earthly life. That would be utterly wrong. Truly, the dead are obliged to look at these things from quite another point of view. Moreover, we may ask ourselves, are we not largely influenced in our estimate of our fellow human beings by these subjective feelings — by all that lies inherent in our subjective interest, our vanity and egoism and the like? Let us not think for a moment that a dead person can have any interest in such relationships between ourselves and other human beings, or in our actions which proceed out of such interests. But we must also not imagine that the dead person does not see what is living in our souls. For it is really living there, and the dead one sees it well enough. He shares in it, too, but he sees something else as well. One who is dead has quite another way of judging people. He sees them quite differently. As to the way in which the dead person sees the human beings who are here on earth, there is one thing of outstanding importance. Let us not imagine that the dead has not a keen and living interest in the world of human beings. He has, indeed, for the world of human beings belongs to the whole cosmos. Our own life belongs to the cosmos. And just

as we, even in the physical world, interest ourselves in the subordinate kingdoms, so do the dead interest themselves intensely in the human world, and send their active impulses into the human world. For the dead work through the living into this world. We have only just given an example of the way in which they go on working soon after their passage through the Gate of Death.

But the dead sees one thing above all, and that most clearly. Suppose, for example, that he sees a human being here following impulses of hatred — hating this person or that, and with a merely personal intensity or purpose. This the dead sees. At the same time, however, according to the whole manner of his vision and all that he is then able to know, he will observe quite clearly, in such a case, the part which Ahriman is playing. He sees how Ahriman impels the person to hatred. The dead actually sees Ahriman working upon the human being. On the other hand, if a person on earth is vain, he sees Lucifer working at him. That is the essential point. It is in connection with the world of Ahriman and Lucifer that the dead human being sees the human beings who are here on earth. Consequently, what generally colours our judgement of people is quite eliminated for the dead. We see this or that human being, whom in one sense or another

we must condemn. Whatever we find blameworthy in him, we put it down to him. The dead does not put it down directly to the human being. He sees how the person is misled by Lucifer or Ahriman. This brings about a toning-down, so to speak, of the sharply differentiated feelings which in our physical and earthly life we generally have towards this or that human being. To a far greater extent, a kind of universal human love arises in the dead. This does not mean that he cannot criticize — that is to say, cannot rightly see what is evil in evil. He sees it well enough, but he is able to refer it to its origin — to its real inner connections.

What I have here described is not without its results, for it means that an occultly-trained person cannot consciously come near to one who is dead unless he truly frees himself from feelings of personal sympathy or antipathy to individuals. He must not allow himself to be dependent, in his soul, on personal feelings of sympathy or antipathy. You need only imagine it for a moment. Suppose that an occultly-trained, clairvoyant person were about to approach a dead human being — whoever he might be — so that the inspirations which the dead was sending in towards him might find their way into his consciousness. Suppose, moreover, that the one here living were pursuing another human

being with a quite special hatred — hatred having its origin only in personal relationships. Then, of a truth, as fire is avoided by our hand, so would the dead avoid such a person who was capable of hatred for personal reasons. He cannot approach him, for hatred works on the dead like fire. To come into conscious relation with the dead we must be able to make ourselves like them — independent, in a sense, of personal sympathies and antipathies.

Hence you will understand what I now have to say. Bear in mind this whole relation of the dead to the living, in so far as it rests on Inspirations. Remember that the inspirations are always there, even if they pass unnoticed. They are perpetually living in the human astral body, so that the human being upon earth has his relations to the dead in this direct way, too. Now, after all that we have said, you will well understand that these relationships depend on our whole mood and spirit here in our life on earth. If our attitude to other people is hostile, if we are without interest or sympathy for our contemporaries above all, if we have not an unprejudiced interest in our fellow human beings — then are the dead unable to approach us in the way they long to do. They cannot properly transplant themselves into our souls, or, if they must do so, in one way or another it is made

difficult for them and they can only do it with great suffering and pain. All in all, the living-together of the dead with the living is complicated.

Thus man goes on working beyond the time when he passes through the Gate of Death, even directly, inasmuch as after death he inspires those who are living on the physical plane. And this is absolutely true. Notably as to their inner habits and qualities — the way they think and feel and develop inclinations — those who are living at any given time on earth are largely dependent on those who died and passed from the earth before them, who were related to them during their life, or to whom they themselves established a relation even after death — which may sometimes happen, though it is not so easy.

A certain portion of the world-ordering and of the whole progress of mankind is altogether dependent on this working of the dead into the life of earthly human beings, inspiring them. Nay, more, in their instinctive life people are not without an inkling that it is so and that it must be so. We can observe it if we consider ways of life, formerly very wide-spread, which are now dying out because humanity in the course of evolution goes ever onward to new forms of life. In bygone times when, generally speaking, they divined far more of the

reality of spiritual worlds, people were more deeply aware of what is necessary for life as a whole. They knew that the living need the dead — need to receive into their habits and customs the impulses from the dead. What, then, did they do? You need only think of former times, when in wide circles it was customary for a father to take care that his son should inherit and carry on his business, so that the son went on working on the same lines. Then when the father was long dead, inasmuch as the son remained in the same channels of life, a bond of communication was created through the physical world itself. The son's activity and life-work being akin to his father's, the father was able to work on in him. Many things in life were based on this principle. And if whole classes of society attached great value to the inheritance of this or that property within the class or within its several families, it was due to their divining this necessity. Into the life-habits of those who live later, the life-habits of those who lived earlier must enter, but only when these life-habits are so far ripened that they come from them after they have passed through the Gate of Death — for it is only then that they become mature.

These things are ceasing, as you know — for such is the progress of the human race. We can already see a time approaching when these inheritances, these

conservative conditions, will no longer play a part. The physical bonds will no longer be there in the same way. But all the more, to compensate for this, people must receive such detailed spiritual-scientific knowledge as will lift the whole matter into their consciousness. For then they will be able consciously to connect their life with the life-habits of former times — with which we have to reckon in order that life may go forward with continuity. Since the beginning of the fifth post-Atlantean period we are living in a transition time. During this time a more or less chaotic state has intervened. But the conditions will arise again when in a far more conscious way — by recognition of the spiritual-scientific truths — people will connect their life and work with that which has gone before them. Unconsciously, merely instinctively, they used to do so — of that there can be no doubt. But even that which is still instinctive to this day must be transmuted into consciousness. Instinctively, for instance, people still teach in this way — only we do not observe it. One who studies history on spiritual lines will soon observe it, if only he pays attention to the facts and not to the dreadful abstractions which prevail nowadays in the so-called humanistic branches of scholarship. If we look at the facts we can well observe it: what is taught in a given epoch bears a certain character only because people attach themselves unconsciously,

instinctively, to what the dead are pouring down into the present. If once you learn to study in a real way the educational ideas which are propounded in any given age by the leading spirits in education — I mean not the charlatans but the true educationists — you will soon see how these ideas have their origins in the habitual natures of those who have recently died.

This is a far more intimate living-together; for that which plays into the human being's astral body enters far more into his inner life than that which plays into his etheric body. The communion which the dead themselves, as individualities, can have with people on earth, is far more intimate than that which the etheric bodies have — or, for that matter, any other elemental beings. Hence you will see how the succeeding epoch in the life of humanity is always conditioned by the preceding one. The preceding time always goes on living in the time that follows. For in reality, strange though it may sound, it is only after our death that we become truly ripe to influence other people — I mean to influence them directly, working right into their inner being. To impress our own habits on any man who is 'of age' (I mean now, spiritually speaking, not in the legal sense) is the very thing we should not do. Yet it is right and according to the conditions of the progressive evolution of mankind for

us to do so after we ourselves have passed through the Gate of Death. Beside all the things that are contained in the progress of karma and in the general laws of incarnation, these things take place. If you ask for the occult reasons why, let us say, the people of this year are doing this or that, then — not for all things but certainly for many — you will find that they are doing it because certain impulses are flowing down to them from those who died twenty or thirty years ago, or even longer. These are the hidden connections — the real concrete connections — between the physical and the spiritual world. It is not only for ourselves that something ripens and matures in what we carry with us through the Gate of Death. It is not only for ourselves, but for the world at large. And it is only from a given moment that it becomes truly ripe to work upon others. Then, however, it does become ever riper and riper.

I beg you here to observe that I am not speaking of externals, but of inner, spiritual workings. A person may remember the habits of his dead father or grandfather and repeat them out of memory on the physical plane. That is not what I mean; that is a different matter. I really mean the inspired influences — imperceptible, therefore, to ordinary consciousness — the influences which make themselves felt in our

habits in our most intimate character. Much in our life depends on our finding ourselves obliged, here or there, to free ourselves from the influences — even the well-meant influences — coming to us from the dead. Indeed, we gain much of our inner freedom by having to free ourselves in this way, in one direction or another. Inner conflicts of soul, which a person often does not know, will grow intelligible to him when he views them in this light or that, taking his light from spiritual knowledge of this kind. To use a trite expression, we may say: the past is rumbling on — the souls of the past go rumbling on — in our own inner life.

These things are facts — truths into which we look by spiritual vision. But alas, especially in the life of today, men have a peculiar relation to these truths. It was not always so. Anyone who can study history in a spiritual way will know this. Today people are afraid of these truths — they are afraid of facing them. They have a nameless fear — not indeed conscious, but unconscious. Unconsciously they are afraid of recognizing the mysterious connections between soul and soul, not only in this world, but between here and the other world. It is this unconscious fear which holds back the people in the outer world. This is a part of that which holds them back, instinctively, from

spiritual science. They are afraid of knowing the reality. They are all unaware of how they are disturbing — by their unwillingness to know reality — disturbing and confusing the whole course of world-evolution, and with it, needless to say, the life that will have to be lived through between death and a new birth, when these conditions must be seen.

Still more mature — for everything that evolves, becomes ever riper and more mature — still more mature becomes that which lives in us when it no longer has to stop short at Inspiration but can become Intuition (in the true sense in which I used the word in [*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*](#)). Now Intuition can only be a being that has none other than a Spirit-body (to use this paradoxical expression). To work intuitively upon other beings — and, among others, upon those who are still incarnated here in the physical life — a human being must first have laid aside his astral body; that is to say, he must first belong entirely to the spiritual world. That will be decades after his death, as we know. Then he can also work down on other people through intuition — no longer merely through Inspiration as I described it just now. Not until then does he as ego — now in the spiritual world — work in a purely spiritual way into other egos. Formerly he worked by Inspiration into the

astral body — or, via his etheric body, into the etheric body of man. But one who has been dead for decades past can also work directly as an ego — albeit at the same time he can still work through the other vehicles, as described above. It is at this stage that the human individuality grows ripe to enter no longer merely into the habits of people but even into their views and ideas of life. To modern feeling, full of prejudice as it is, this may be an unpleasant truth — very unpleasant, I doubt not. None the less it is true. Our views and ideas, originating as they do in our ego, are under constant influences from those long dead. In our views and conceptions of life, those who are long dead are living. By this very means, the continuity of evolution is preserved — out of the spiritual world. It is a necessity, for otherwise the thread of people's ideas would constantly be broken.

Forgive me if I insert a personal matter at this point. I do so, if I may say so, for thoroughly objective reasons. For such a truth as this can only be made intelligible by concrete examples.

No one ought really to bring forward, as views or ideas, his own personal opinions — however sincerely gained. Therefore, no one who stands with full sincerity on the true ground of occultism — no one

who is experienced in the conditions of spiritual science — will impose his own opinions on the world. On the contrary, he will do all he can to avoid imposing his own opinions directly. For the opinions, the outlook he acquires under the influence of his own personal tendency of feeling, should not begin to work until thirty or forty years after his death. Then it will work in this way: it will come into the souls of people along the same paths as the impulses of the Time-Spirits or Archai. Only then has it become so mature that its working is in harmony with the objective course of things. Hence it is necessary for everyone who stands on the true ground of occultism to avoid making personal proselytes — setting out to gain followers for his own personal views. That is the general custom nowadays. No sooner has anyone got an opinion of his own, he cannot hasten enough to make propaganda for it. That is what a real and practising spiritual scientist cannot possibly desire to do. Now I may bring in the personal matter to which I referred just now. It is no chance, but something essential to my life, that I began by writing — communicating to the world — not my own views, but Goethe's world-conception. That was the first thing I wrote. I wrote entirely in the spirit and in the sense of Goethe's world-conception, thus taking my start not from any living person. For even if that living person

were oneself, it could not possibly justify one in teaching spiritual science in the comprehensive way I try to do. It was a necessary link in the chain, when I thus placed my work into the objective course of world-evolution. Therefore I did not write my theory of knowledge, but Goethe's — [*A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*](#) — and in this way I continued.

Thus you will see how the development of man goes on. What he attained on earth ripens not only for the sake of his own life as he advances on the paths of karma. It ripens also for the world. So we continue to work for the world. After a certain time we become ripe to send imaginations; then — after a further time — inspirations into the habits of human beings. And only after a longer time has elapsed do we grow ready and mature enough to send intuitions into the most intimate part of man's life — into the views and conceptions of people.

Let us not imagine that our views and conceptions of life grow out of nothing — or that they arise anew in every age. They grow from the soil in which our own soul is rooted, which soil is in truth identical with the sphere of activity of human beings who died long ago.

By knowledge of such facts, I do believe human life must receive that enrichment which it needs, according to the character and sense of our age and of the immediate future. Many an old custom has grown rotten to the core. The new must be developed, as I have often said; but man cannot enter the new life without those impulses which grow in him through spiritual science. It is the feelings that matter — the feelings towards the world in its entirety, and all the other beings of the world, which we acquire through spiritual science. Our mood of life grows different through spiritual science. The super-sensible, in which we always are, becomes alive for us through spiritual science. We are and always have been living in it; but human beings will be called to know it, more and more consciously, the farther they evolve through the fifth, sixth and seventh post-Atlantean epochs and for the rest of earthly time.

These things I wanted to communicate to you today. They are indeed essential to the enrichment, the quickening of man's whole feeling for the world, and to the deepening of all his life. These things I wanted to kindle in your hearts, now that we have been able to be together once more after a lapse of time. May we be able to be together often again to speak of similar matters, so that our souls may partake in achieving

that evolution of mankind which is the aim and
endeavour of spiritual science.

5. Relationships between the Living and the Dead

Let us, first of all, turn our thoughts to those who stand out there upon the battlefields, where historic events are being enacted, and who must be answerable with body, soul and spirit for these tremendous happenings of the present time.

Spirits ever watchful. Guardians of their souls,
May your vibrations waft,
to the Earth-men committed to your charge.
Our souls' petitioning love:
That, united with your power,
Our prayer may helpfully radiate
To the souls it lovingly seeks.

And for those who, in consequence of these events,
have already passed through the gate of death: —

Spirits ever watchful. Guardians of their souls,
May your vibrations waft,
To the Men of the Spheres committed to your charge,
Our souls' petitioning love:
That, united with your power,
Our prayer may helpfully radiate
To the souls it lovingly seeks.

And that Spirit whom we seek to know through our Spiritual Science, who passed through the Mystery of Golgotha for the salvation of the earth, for the progress and freedom of mankind — may He be with you and your difficult duties.

It is our striving to penetrate, knowingly and at the same time livingly, in so far as this is possible, into those worlds which are closed to the usual everyday knowledge, the usual intellectual knowledge — bound to the physical plane.

For, in the life in which man is enclosed in his physical body, he stands in a world, as we have become accustomed to think during the course of years, which is only a part, a small part, of the entire actual world. As we come together so seldom, it is not possible, at these meetings, to explain everything from its foundations. How well founded these things are, that must be spoken of at such meetings, which take place only at less frequent intervals, and by what means they are established — this we must assume to be known from other meetings and through our books. For particularly at such a gathering it may, indeed, be our desire to learn something more important and more essential about what has just been referred to,

about the greater, real world, which embraces both the physical and the spiritual world.

Since we last gathered here, many things have taken place within the circle which nurtures our spiritual science. A larger number of our dear friends have passed through the portal of death. Also, since the beginning of this hard war time, friends have passed through the portal of death who had to take part directly in these great events. In other words, within our circle, we are ourselves touched by the great spiritual world, because souls who were among us have entered this spiritual world after laying aside their bodies. It lies within the attitude which results from our Spiritual Science that, for us, the souls who have left the physical plane, who are received by another world, remain united with us, as they were united with us while they still looked at us with physical eyes and could speak to us by means of the instrument of the physical body.

Precisely when we approach the world which has received into itself our dead, in this moment, as we draw nearer to the souls of the so-called dead, we learn to know all those shattering experiences which must heap themselves upon our soul where it seeks to look across the threshold which separates us from the

spiritual world, when it seeks to enter the world which can only be seen in the disembodied state of the soul. And you will perhaps understand that many of the words spoken here to-day resound out of the many feelings which have passed through my own soul in the course of the year, since we last saw one another.

Particularly during the last year, I have often had to say to our friends, that the right confidence can be gained only gradually, by one who sees into the fundamental conditions of existence, when he knows that those who have passed through the portal of death and who were faithful fellow-workers here on earth, will remain so also after death; so that in our work we quite certainly do not lose those souls who have won an understanding of our work, because they were already united with us here before they passed through the portal of death. And just among such souls there are such faithful fellow-worker that we may say: Even if the enemies and the lack of understanding here on the physical plane are sometimes so strong in opposition to our work, and become ever stronger, as we can well see, yet we may still have faith that Spiritual Science will penetrate into the evolution of mankind, because we can win this faith through our connection with the disembodied souls who have reached an

understanding of the whole significance of our work for the course of man's development.

Of course, just when the human being, by means of his opened soul, approaches the world in which the so-called dead are — we can speak in this way, although it is, of course, the entire spiritual world in which the dead are to be found — precisely then, when the human being is able to approach this world as a visitor, as one who accompanies the dead into the spiritual world, he learns to know again and again that which has also been emphasised here: that, in reality, the concepts, the percepts and ideas which we form concerning the world, since we form them as we do because we are in a physical body, must be changed, must be made pliant, flexible, so that they can also encompass the secrets of the spiritual world. The man of to-day is adapted very strongly to the purely material perception of his surroundings, and thus he also forms concepts according to a purely material perception. For this reason, it becomes especially difficult for him to penetrate into the spiritual world even by means of concepts. In fact, many people believe that it is not possible to attain to an understanding of the spiritual world, if we are not able to see into it. They believe this, however, only because their ideas have become stiff and dead, through the

fact that they have too strongly accustomed themselves to think only about the physical world.

Now that I have made these introductory remarks, I should like to speak to you to-day particularly about certain things in connection with the life of the so-called dead.

We know that, if we wish to consider the life between death and a new birth, we must consider and notice carefully how the human being forms himself of four parts, which are well known to us: physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego.

If we consider, to begin with, the most outward fact regarding the dead a fact visible *even from the physical plane*, we find it to be the fact that man lays aside his physical body. We do not need to go into the different ways by which this physical body becomes united with the earth, be it by means of fire or decay — these differ, after all, only in regard to the time which they require.

But, even when we consider this fact, that the physical body falls away from the whole being of man in the moment of death and unites itself with the earth, as we say, — if we consider even this fact only with regard to its meaning for the physical plane, we

shall have considered it, in reality, in a very inadequate way. And, in fact, it is often considered in a most inadequate way by persons of all manner of spiritual-scientific tendencies, who allow themselves still to be led astray by all sorts of moral conceptions, which do indeed penetrate into spiritual realms, to a certain extent, but are unfitted, in many respects, to understand in the right way the penetration of the spiritual into the physical world.

All physical events have also their spiritual significance. There is no physical event which has not, at the same time, a spiritual significance. In this case, then, the physical event is that our physical body falls away from us and is at the same time separated into its parts, into its molecules, into its atoms, and given over to the earth.

Now, it is a great prejudice of the modern materialistic world-conception, which has, however, held mankind more or less in its grip already for a long time, that the human body, as we carry it about from birth until death, or let us say from conception until death, that this human body simply falls into the smallest possible parts, into atoms, and that these atoms are then incorporated in the earth, or the

sphere of the earth, and thereafter remain atoms, and then pass over as such into other beings.

Through the modern materialistic mode of investigation one comes very easily to such a preconception. But this mode of conception is, after all, nothing but nonsense, in view of spiritual science. It is nonsense. For, in reality, there are no such things as atoms, in the sense in which the chemists assume them. What the smallest parts of our bodies finally become, under all circumstances, regardless of the way in which we, as bodies, are united with the earth, is *warmth*. Our whole physical organism finally transforms itself, in reality, in one way or another, in a short or a long time, into warmth.

For this reason, we often speak, as you know, in spiritual science of warmth as a fourth physical state of aggregation, whereas physics does not acknowledge it as such, but only as a kind of characteristic. But it is this warmth which is, in reality, given to the earth; this is given over to the earth. Thus, from our physical body, we give to our earth — Warmth.

The warmth which is to be found in the earth, is, in reality, intimately connected with what human beings

leave behind. Man does not transform himself into air, water, etc. These are only transitional stages through which he passes. Those parts of him which become air and water become at last warmth. Yes, even though it may be after a long time, even though the last remnants of matter may pass over into warmth only after hundreds of years, indeed, even though what belongs to the bone-system may pass over into warmth only after thousands of years, it is transformed finally into warmth.

If you go into Museums to-day, you will find skeletons of ancient men who lived upon earth in bygone ages, yet the time will indeed come when what is present there to-day as skeletons, will exist only as warmth within the body of the earth.

In any case, however, the way in which we are united with the earth, through warmth, is the materialistic way. The fact that even our physical body remains connected with the earth, has a great, an essential, importance for the one who has passed through the gate of death. He passes into the spiritual world. He leaves his body to the earth. This is an experience, an event, for the so-called dead. He has the experience: — “Your body passes away from you”. We must realise that this is an experience.

What is an experience? Well, you can form a conception of what it is, if you consider the experiences on the physical plane. It is an experience, if you have some new sensation, or feeling which you have never had before, and you learn to understand this. You have added something to your soul which you did not possess before a new concept, a new perception.

But now imagine such a small experience increased into a very great one. It is something mighty, something unfathomably mighty, that the human being experiences, which gives him the possibility between death and birth to see, to realise, to grasp the fact that he lays this physical body aside, that he gives over to the planet which he is leaving. It is a very great experience, an experience which naturally cannot be compared with any experience on earth — a mighty experience. The value of an experience lies in the fact that something remains in our soul as a result, as a consequence, of this experience. We may, therefore, ask the question: — What then remains as a result, as a consequence of this experience of the falling away of the physical body from the entirety of our being?

Indeed, if we were not able to have this experience when we pass through the gate of death, of knowingly participating in the falling away of our physical body, we should never be able to develop an Ego-consciousness after death. The Ego consciousness is aroused after death through this experience of the falling away of the physical body. For the dead it is of the greatest significance that he is able to say: — “I see my physical body slipping away from me and disappearing.” And, on the other hand: — “I see growing within me, out of this event, the feeling — I am an Ego.”

We may express this with the paradox words: — “If we were unable to experience our death from the other side, we would not have an Ego-consciousness after death.”

Just as the human soul entering existence through birth or, let us say, through conception — gradually becomes accustomed to the use of the physical apparatus and thereby acquires the Ego-consciousness within the body, so does the human being acquire the Ego consciousness after death, from the other side of existence, through the fact that he experiences the falling away of the physical body from the whole human being.

Consider now, for a moment, what this means. When we contemplate Death from the physical side of existence, we may say that it appears to us as the end of existence — as that which has beyond it, as far as the physical outlook is concerned, “Nothing”. Viewed from the other side, Death as such is a most wonderful thing, which can ever anew stand before man’s soul. For it signifies that man can always have the feeling of the victory of spiritual life over physical life. And just as long as we can always have before us the conception of our birth here, in physical life — for no one can have the conceptual nature of his birth through physical means alone, indeed, no one knows anything about his birth through his own physical experience — just so surely do we always have before us, when we become fully conscious after death, a direct experience of the event of our death.

At the same time, this event of our death contains nothing which is in any way depressing; on the contrary, this death event, viewed from the other side, is the greatest, most wonderful and beautiful event which can appear before our soul. For it always places before us, in its entirety, the greatness of the idea that in the spiritual world, consciousness, self-consciousness is the result of death — that death

stimulates this self-consciousness, in the spiritual world.

Secondly, we must observe the second member of our human existence, the etheric body. We find, with the help of the elementary presentations which we have all shared in, in the interval since we last met together, that this ether-body remains with us for a brief — a relatively brief — period after death, but after this, it is also laid aside. We know, too, that a certain importance must be attributed to the fact that our etheric body — the same one we possessed on earth — remains still united with us after death, for several days.

So long as we still carry this etheric body, after having laid aside our physical body, we can still think everything that we were able to think during our physical existence. We can, therefore, survey all the thoughts which we carry in us, as in a mighty picture. We see those thoughts which we experienced during life, in the life-picture which has often been described to you. Our whole life lies before us like a panorama, during the days in which we still carry our etheric body with us; and we have it before us simultaneously, i.e. we see it all at one glance. For, what we call memory, here, in the physical world,

arises, to be sure, in the etheric body, but it is bound, nevertheless, to the physical body. This physical body we have laid aside. We see our thoughts. We do not draw them out of the depths that are connected with the physical body, but we see them; and we survey, as if in a panorama, the life which we have just passed through.

We then lay aside this etheric body. But this etheric body which we lay aside, remains visible for us, throughout our entire remaining life after death. It is outside, but it remains visible to us. It unites itself with the whole universe; nevertheless, whatever happens to it there, remains visible to us — we see it.

And this is one of the mysteries of death: that, so long as we carry our etheric body, we see in a panorama what we had in us in the form of thoughts while we were alive — we survey, as it were, what is outside us as being united with, woven into, the world; we see that, after death, it forms part of our surrounding world, not of our Ego. In this experience, it actually is as if that which weaved and lived in us as our etheric body, during life, were now entering the life of the etheric world outside.

Then comes the time, as you know, when we carry with us — of that which we carried here on the physical plane — only the Ego and the astral body, and when we, of course, look back upon what we were. We then experience ourselves in an entirely different way from the way we did in the physical body — we experience ourselves with an enhanced consciousness, with a consciousness which death has founded in us.

We must never think, for instance, as the fanatics so easily do, that this life between death and a new birth is an unconscious experience for the soul. Connected with this life, is a stronger, more intensive consciousness, than is the consciousness belonging to the physical body — only that it has an entirely different form. And, of course, we can approach the way in which we should imagine the dead, only by taking all that Spiritual Science can give us, to help us to transform those conceptions which are suited to purely physical objects and events here on the physical plane.

Thus we now live, as we see, within our Ego and our astral body. We have cast off our etheric body. It is united with objective existence.

For one who is able to enter the spiritual world, it is a moving experience, indeed — and from this standpoint also, I may say — to visit and accompany the dead with whom one is able to find a contact; it is a moving experience to follow, not only the individual life of the dead between death and a new birth, but also, for instance, to follow what the dead beholds: that part of himself which is now contained, as his etheric body, in the woof of the world, which is now for him an exterior world, an objective world. It is deeply moving to observe what, the dead has just given over to the etheric world. Thus we may experience the dead in a twofold way, as it were. We can experience that part of him which he has passed on to the etheric world; and we can experience also that part which contains his consciousness after death.

I repeat, that this first contact with what the dead leave behind in the etheric world, is deeply moving. It would move us even if we were unable to come into contact with the Being itself, which continues to live between death and a new birth, and which carries both the consciousness and the self-consciousness of the deceased, but could come into contact only with what he had left behind. Even then this kind of experience would move our souls most deeply — it

would have that moving quality peculiar to all contacts with the spiritual world.

And a part of what especially moves us is the actual, living experience that such spiritual substance as has here been indicated — indeed, that etheric spiritual thing which has been left behind by the dead — is, in reality, always round about us. Just so truly as we are living in the air which surrounds man everywhere, just so truly are we, at the same time, surrounded by what the dead have left behind them, as etheric spirituality. In this world, in which we stand, even with our physical bodies there is also that spiritual element which I have just mentioned. Just as we are surrounded by the air, so are we, in the same way, surrounded by what the dead leave behind. It is only states of consciousness that sever us from the spiritual world — we are not separated from them through spatial conditions, but only through conditions of consciousness.

Consider, for instance, the following fact: — Let us imagine a human being who is striving to carry out the following soul exercises. But I should like to emphasize that such soul-exercises must be carried out in perfect calmness of soul. If anyone becomes in any way excited through these exercises, he will damage

himself. If soul-exercises are carried on in the way described here and in our literature, so that they are real soul-exercises, and our physical being does not take part in them, then they can never damage a human being in the very least — they cannot even damage his soul. Yet we should not on the other hand, be able to penetrate into spiritual knowledge, did we not call attention to such things, now and again.

Let us suppose that someone does the following exercise, and that he says to himself: — With my eyes I see red, blue, etc. And now he proceeds by experiencing something that is in a certain sense alive — when he sees red, blue green, etc.

Gradually, we begin to realise that, after all, we live in the physical world — especially our modern materialistic age — in a very coarse way — that we do not notice the finer experiences which come to us.

This finer element may be experienced if we take notice of the more purely soul-impression made upon us — let us say by colours — but also by other sense-impressions. Of course everybody knows, roughly speaking, that when he looks upon a blue surface, the impression it leaves will not be the same as that left by a red surface. A red surface — and I must

emphasize this particularly — even when a person is not made nervous by looking at it, has something that attacks something which comes out of the surface, as it were, and thrusts itself at us. Whereas blue, for instance, awakens the opposite sensation — it remains quietly in its place; nothing comes toward us, out of the blue. On the contrary, we feel — if we are able to accompany colour-impressions with a fine feeling — that we can penetrate into this blue with our soul forces, that we can press through it.

Green is, as it were, in a rythmical state of balance. This is why it has so beneficent an effect upon us, as the plant's covering of the earth. Green works upon us in such a way that we are able, in part, to penetrate into it, while at the same time it comes back again toward us. When we look out upon the wide green field, we have this impression, that we enter into something; yet, at the same time, that it comes toward us. This is what constitutes the refreshing effect made upon us by a wide green field.

You will be able to convince yourselves of this fact: that human beings have noticed that it is possible to live with colour as it were, and if you read in Goethe's Theory of Colours — which, to be sure, is understood by very few persons of to-day — the chapter on the

ethical effects of colours, you will find indicated the corresponding feeling to be experienced through each colour. Thus we find that we can experience colours ... we can also experience other sense-impressions; but, for the moment, we are speaking about colours, in order to have an example.

We can live with colours in such a way that blue, for example, calls to life in our souls a force that resembles the longing which goes forth from us and which is taken up kindly by blue.

In the case of red, something always arises which seems to come toward us and will not leave us alone — something that wishes to overpower us, as it were.

When we thus feel colours, we may have a soul-experience — a moral soul-experience, as it were. Of course, not every human being can carry on such experiences in any one incarnation; but I am describing them to you, in order that you may see how the different worlds are interrelated.

If, accordingly, a man were to carry on these exercises, he would live far more purely in the world of colours. And if he did them in connection with other sense-impressions, he would likewise live more purely in the other sense-impressions. In that case, however,

something else would very soon have to arise — something different would take place.

Suppose that such a person were to experience the blue sky in this living way; he would in this case, not simply have the blue above him, (this is, moreover, a very subjective blue; for, in reality, there is no vault above us) but he would feel it above him as the inner surface of a beneficent, inner hemisphere, everywhere receiving his soul-life — a hemisphere, behind the apparent surface of which the soul's experience could penetrate.

It is because of this that human beings who experience the world in a deeper sense, speak as did Jacob Böhme, for instance, who did not say: — “When we see the blue vault of heaven ...”, but, rather: — “When we see the depths”. In these words, “When we see the depths”, we find contained the whole experience of “blue”.

But there is another parallel phenomenon which arises, if we so completely penetrate into the life of colour, that soul-experiences begin to light up when we see colours. There is then awakened in us the ability to make use of a very brief space of time, which we should otherwise not use at all.

When you face an exterior object in ordinary physical life, you see it — you see a certain colour. And, indeed, this is the starting-point of your impression. Then you are able to think about it. You can form a conceptual idea of the colour. But it is with the act of vision that you begin to live with the object. Yet, nevertheless, this is not the actual beginning of what takes place. Even the modern physiologist, working in the laboratories, knows that a certain time elapses between the effect upon our eye, and the arising of the idea connected with the colour blue. Thus, we see that, first of all, the blue colour works upon our eye. We do not immediately perceive it, but a certain time elapses, and only then do we become conscious of it.

You may read, even in ordinary books, how experiments connected with these things are carried on nowadays in the laboratories. Certain kinds of apparatus are constructed; and then the attempt is made to cause a certain impression — the student is the experimental rabbit. He must register, by means of another apparatus, when he receives the impression, so that one can establish the small fraction of time which elapses between the moment an impression strikes our sense-organs, and the moment we grow conscious of this. A certain space of time elapses. In

this short interval, we do not as yet, for instance, experience the blue colour, (in the case of an impression of blue), but we do experience the moral effect of the colour. This works in us. Thus, the whole process of how the soul pours itself into the blue colour, how it is accepted with a kindly pleasure — all this lives in us already — the soul-element of the colour is active in us before anything else. Only, this activity remains unconscious; man does not perceive it. Man does not begin to develop his consciousness of the colour, until the colour arises. He does not notice what precedes the colour-sensation.

Now, let us think for a moment: when one is impelled to notice more particularly this moral impression of colours, this soul-experience of colours, then something special appears. We notice this when we should colour some sort of a surface — i.e. when we paint, or transmit colours in any way at all, which ought first to arise out of thoughts. In any *real* painting, the artist works out of the soul-impression of the colours. In this case, it is not as it is with the artist who simply uses a model — who simply imitates the model; but, rather the real artist knows that, because he has called forth a particular soul-impression, he must therefore use red; whereas, on some other

surface, he uses blue, because he has called forth this or that soul-impression.

This is the way, you see, in which all of the painting has been worked out in our Dornach Building. The application of the colours has here arisen entirely out of the soul-element — which indeed must then shine through the colours. Yet, in order to achieve this, it was necessary, in the deepest sense of the word, first of all to have the Building in ourselves — as a Soul Being. The way in which the Building faces the world will be identical with the way in which it has grown out of “the Building”, as a Soul-Being.

People would perceive the thing out of which this Dornach Building has grown, were they able to make use of that short interval of time elapsing between the moment in which the Building strikes their sense-organs, and the moment in which the impression reaches their consciousness.

Any one, moreover, who has a share in the erection of the Building, must himself create all that is in it — its forms and colours — out of that short interval of time.

I have led you in a more scientific way, I might say, to something which may appear difficult to you. But

we must also overcome difficulties such as these. Moreover, the possibility may arise, even in this modern Age, as if through an act of grace — and, in a certain sense, we are constantly being favoured by an act of grace, through the simple fact that we are in the world — for man to hold fast, in some way, to this moment. He will see something, and will at times be able to feel that something reciprocal has taken place between himself and the object which he sees outside — if he succeeds in bringing it to his consciousness. He will say to himself, when he sees something: — When I am looking at it, it seems almost as if I had already seen it before this moment.

Perhaps you have all become familiar with the experience of facing a being or an object, and then feeling, as it were, as if, after all, it is not there before you for the first time, when it makes an impression on your consciousness, but that it had already come nearer — indeed, it had come quite close. This creeping nearer — as one might call it — can indeed at times be observed. But, in ordinary life, what here takes place within this brief space of time, lies beyond our consciousness — beyond the threshold.

The moment we are able to bring into our consciousness what thus lies just beyond the

threshold, we make an important spiritual discovery. I shall again bring it to your minds by citing a special case. Many of you have already heard about this. Perhaps I have also mentioned it here, in this place. Last year, a little boy died in close proximity to the Goetheanum Building; he was crushed by a furniture-van. The etheric body of this little boy is now united with the Dornach Building — forms the aura of the Dornach Building and lives in this aura. And when some artistic work must be carried out, in connection with this Building, forces come out of this etheric body, which then, of course, appears enlarged. We can feel these forces in us, in the same way that we feel the Building within our souls.

Why is this so? Because the world of which I have just spoken — that world which is always round about us, but which we do not perceive because it remains unnoticed until its impressions reach us — contains the etheric bodies of the dead, and the dead are looking on these bodies. What the dead see of our world — what the dead look upon — is contained in the etheric world which surrounds us. And we should always see it, if we could, so to speak, look into it before we look out into the physical world — if we were able to take even a little step across the threshold.

This does not, however, prevent the dead from being active in this world, through what they have left behind. We are surrounded by a world in which the etheric bodies of the dead are living. In some way or other, they are connected with that world. And only because what lives in the etheric must first come into contact with our physical body, and must set the physical apparatus into movement, do we fail to perceive this powerful weaving around us, of what the dead leave behind them, in etheric form, in our world. But we must acquire the feeling that it is our duty to enrich our world, in our conceptual ideas, by including in it, in the first place, what is contained in the whole etheric world, through the etheric bodies of the dead.

The dead themselves are not in this world — but only the etheric bodies which they have left behind. We cannot find the dead themselves in so easy a way — although even this “easy way” is difficult.

The dead, after they have laid aside their etheric bodies, continue to live in their astral bodies and their Egos. You can gauge to what extent we must transform our conceptions, if you bear in mind that everything pertaining to thought, is stripped off with our etheric bodies, which pass over into the exterior etheric world. After death, we do not keep the thoughts which we

have collected here, in our physical body. All that pertains to thought becomes an exterior world. The one who has died, does not look upon his thoughts after death in the same way in which he looked upon thoughts which he formed during his life, and which he then remembered and drew up out of his sub-consciousness. After death he looks upon his thoughts as if they were an etheric painting; he sees his thoughts in the world outside. Thoughts are something exterior for one who has passed through the portal of death — they are outside. What reveals itself here through feeling and will, remains connected with our individuality. It continues to live in our astral body and in our Ego.

Our Ego lights up in self-consciousness through the contemplation of the moment of death. Our astral body is kindled because the thoughts contained in the picture before us, penetrate into the astral body. Thus we experience them in our astral body.

In the physical body, on the other hand, we experience thoughts by drawing them up from within us. After death, we experience thoughts by looking at them as we look at the stars, or as we look out at the world and the mountains, and they make an impression upon us; we take up this impression and

experience it in our astral body and our Ego. Thus we see that just the opposite thing takes place: Whereas here on Earth we look upon thoughts as something within us, we must consider them as being something external, after death. Our life then dissolves in the world, flows out in the world.

It is important for us to bear this in mind and not to adopt the idea that the world after death is like a fine, thin repetition of the physical world here — an idea which is often accepted in spiritist circles. It is in fact something entirely different. And it is different, for the reason that our thoughts are Beings outside of us. Now, at the moment we begin to call up before our souls, conceptual ideas like these, we notice not only that we need a certain freedom from prejudice, as I might say, in order to accept Spiritual Science, but also that we must have a certain kind of ability to render our concepts more fluid, to transform our concepts — and that we cannot claim to be able to picture what is in the spiritual world with the same concepts and ideas which we have here, in the physical world.

Consequently, one who is in a position to visit — let us say — a so-called dead person, must first learn how to carry on this intercourse with the dead. Whereas,

here, when we meet a person, we come into contact with his inner life through the fact that he expresses this inner life in words or gestures, we find instead, in the case of the dead, that if we wish to come into contact with him, he shows us what he wishes to tell us in the objective world. We see, as it were, in the form of imaginations, which he shows us, what it is that he experiences, and what he wishes to say to us. I might say that the dead person, when we ask him something, says to us: Look over there — it is there that you will find what I am now experiencing.

But all of this is a rapid process. The dead, accordingly, as you see from what I have said, have the capacity to see supersensibly the thoughts which we, here on earth, can experience only in an inward, invisible way. Only if we acquire the capacity to behold thoughts in union with him, are we able to share in his experience, for this reason, he has the special capacity, as a dead person — as a so-called dead person — to share with us the experience of our thoughts.

We are particularly struck by this in the case of a certain phenomenon which I should like to touch upon. When someone whom we have loved has departed from us, we continue, as we all know, to

cherish our thoughts of him within our souls. We think about the experiences we have had in common, about the feelings we have shared with him, and so forth. The dead person, as I have said, beholds thoughts. He can also see our thoughts, and he can even distinguish very soon the thoughts which he himself has, in the form of impressions of the spiritual world — these are Imaginations of what is contained in the spiritual world, and thoughts living in the soul of a human being who is still dwelling in a physical body. He can distinguish these thoughts. His own inner experience enables him to make this distinction. For, you see, the difference is really very great. When a deceased person (and exactly the same thing applies to an initiate) has to experience a thought about something which exists only in the spiritual world, he must himself experience this thought, actively. He must himself first follow the thought — every position of it, as it were. It is difficult to make this process clear; but I might explain it as follows: — Suppose a painting were hanging before us, here. But supposing you were to see this painting only when you yourself had traced its lines and painted its colours — followed all the details. This is what the dead can do. He paints every thought he sees; he himself creates the thoughts anew, as it were, and experiences his own activity. A large portion of the life between death and a new birth

consists in this — in a creative copying of what exists in the spiritual world as thought-formations. We must learn to create these anew, with the dead — then we know that these are forms of thought which pertain only to the spiritual world.

The experience is different when we look down from the spiritual world upon the thoughts living in the human beings who have been left behind in the physical world. In this case, it is not necessary to re-create them; but these thoughts actually come to meet us, so that the dead person can remain passive. Just as a flower does not need first to be drawn or painted by us, but immediately makes an impression upon us, so it is with the thoughts coming from those who are still alive. These thoughts actually arise in a way similar to the way in which impressions arise, here in the physical world.

And this is just what uplifts, gladdens and warms the dead, in the thoughts of the living whom they have loved. For it is a very special sphere of activity for the dead — this being able to look into the thoughts of those whom they have left behind and who loved them. This is a special world for them.

It would be possible — would it not — for us to experience the physical world, as if it contained only what arises in the mineral, animal and vegetable kingdom and in the kingdom of man. In this case, for example, the physical world would contain no Art. Art would have to be added to all this — it would have to be created in addition to what we actually need. Yet Art is the very element which, from a soul-aspect of human evolution, must not be absent in the world, in spite of the fact that Nature would be just as perfect as it is, even if there were no Art. Thus, the dead could go on living, if necessary — although it would be like the human being living in a barren, lifeless, naked world of Nature, a world devoid of Art — were the peculiar circumstance to arise that everyone who had died were to be immediately forgotten, after death, by those who had loved him. Whatever can be seen as thoughts, remaining in the souls of those who love the dead, is something which is, to be sure, an additional element, going beyond the immediate requirements of the world of the dead; yet, at the same time, it uplifts and beautifies the life of the dead. It cannot be compared with Art in the physical world — that is to say, it can be compared, but the comparison is a lame one — for it means for the dead, as I have said, an uplifting, a beautifying element, yet in a far higher

sense than the beautifying influence of Art is for us, here, in the physical world.

Thus it is deeply significant for the whole existence of the world, if we unite our thoughts with the thoughts of the dead, and especially if we do this in the form which we have often spoken about, here. Above all, we should approach the dead with thoughts clothed in that language, in that language of concepts which is common both to the living and to the dead — in the language which we speak here, in Spiritual Science. For the dead understand what constitutes the contents of Spiritual Science, just as well as do the living. And, moreover, it never becomes alien to the dead.

It is precisely through the bringing together of conceptual ideas such as these, I believe, that we shall be able gradually to form a plastic picture of the spiritual world. We can thus find our way into what lies beyond the threshold — whence, in reality, there flows forth all that exists for us on this side of the threshold.

In the face of these phenomena, we must bear in mind that present-day humanity is shortsighted in its vision of the world — and this is justified, to be sure, because it forms part of the universal plan — at the

same time, it really is more shortsighted than it needs to be. For, you see, when a materialistic person of the present day forms his ideas, his conceptions of the world, he thinks that these are the universally-accepted human ideas and conceptions. You know how difficult it is to convince a materialistically-minded person that there are also other ways of thinking than his own. The standpoint taken by the materialist causes him to say that anyone who does not think as he does is a fool. There is no greater inward intolerance than that of a materialist.

Hence, a materialistic person actually thinks, generally speaking: — “Oh, of course, in the past, men thought all manner of things as to the existence of the spiritual; they could hardly move a step, in their daily life, without suspecting the presence of spirits everywhere, or indeed without seeing them. But all this was sheer fancy — now, at last, we have progressed so far that we have discarded this childish play of the human race.”

And yet it would seem as if human beings ought to be able to see at each step how nonsensical such a conception really is.

I shall try to make this clear to you, by citing an example, which may appear to be far-fetched, and from an entirely different side than the one we have discussed to-day in essence.

Let us think, for a moment, about that picture, which we have often discussed from various aspects, relating to the first stage of human evolution on earth — of man's life in Paradise, as we find it described in the Bible. Let us think about this picture of Adam and Eve in Paradise, the first human beings — Eve biting into the apple and giving the apple to Adam. Let us think of the picture of the Serpent on the Tree, tempting Eve.

When the painter of our day paints this picture — and even to-day, the modern painters still occasionally *do* paint it — he paints it, to be sure, in such a way that the picture will show a woman as true to Nature as possible, and a still more naturalistic man, because this is modern ... Impressionism, Expressionism, and I do not know what else; in any case, a very naturalistic woman and a still more naturalistic man, then a naturalistic landscape, and a naturalistic serpent showing, of course, greedy naturalistic teeth, etc. This is actually the way it is painted.

Painters have not always painted in this way, however; for such a picture would not render the true facts, as we know them. We know that in the Serpent, we may recognize a symbol of the real Tempter, Lucifer. Moreover, Lucifer is a Being who, as we know, remained behind during the Moon Period, and who — in the way in which he appears during the Earth Period — may be symbolized by the Serpent. Nevertheless, the Serpent is not Lucifer, and this must somehow become evident, spiritually. In other words, this Lucifer must also be seen with the forces of the soul — he must be seen from within, through the effort of inner forces.

How is it possible to see him, my dear friends? Indeed, we bear within us all the impressions of Lucifer. We actually carry them about within us. Just as we carry about the impressions of Ahriman, so we carry these in us, also.

Now I shall explain to you as briefly as possible, without any proofs or detailed explanations — these you must find for yourselves, in our already existing literature on this subject — how it is possible to form a conception of Lucifer.

Man carries about within him the impulses of Lucifer. They live in him in such a way that they are centred in his head, and from there they permeate the astral body where the Luciferic principle has remained within him; that is to say they force their way into his head — whereas otherwise it is the Spirits of Form which have moulded his head — and they also force their way into what is formed by the astral force into the spinal cord.

Thus, if we were to draw the head of a man and prolongation, the spine, the result would be a Serpent, a serpent like form, with a human head. Of course, the whole thing should be imagined as an astral form — the head to some extent still resembling a human head, and the spinal cord appended to it and turning around like a serpent. Imagine this projected objectively — and you will have a serpent with a human head. That is, Lucifer viewed externally, in the form of an image, assumes the aspect of a serpent with a *human* head. Not a serpent with a *serpent's* head, for that would no longer be a Lucifer — that would be an earthly serpent, which has already, as an earthly creature, been subjected to the influence of the Spirits of Form.

Hence, if a painter wished to paint Lucifer on the Tree, he would have to imagine the Serpent coiled

around the Tree with a human head looking out above. He would then be painting out of the knowledge gained through our Spiritual Science.

Thus, we should have to picture Adam and Eve by the side of the Tree, and — coiled into the Tree — the astral shape of the spinal cord, resembling, as I have said, a serpent body, together with the image of the human head. If the woman Eve, sees it first, it will, of course, take on the form of a woman's face.

If you go into the Museum here, and look at the painting of Master Bertram, you will see there, that in the Middle Ages this kind of serpent was still portrayed coiled on the Tree, as I have explained. It is most striking and sublime; for it proves to us that a painter living in the very heart of the Middle Ages could paint from out of the true and real concepts of the spiritual world. This is an undeniable proof for the fact that we need not go back so very many centuries; and there are many documents, still existing to-day, to show us that in those days people still knew something of what our present materialistic humanity has already forgotten.

Of course, in an exterior history of Art, this fact which I have just mentioned is never touched upon.

Nevertheless, anyone — by adopting not only the modern materialistic attitude, but also the materialistic standpoint or conception — can convince himself that both the vision of the spiritual, and the disappearance of this vision, are events of only a few centuries ago. Anyone here in Hamburg can convince himself of this, by going to the Museum and looking at this Paradise-picture of Master Bertram, he will find, there, the irrefutable proof, furnished on the physical plane, that it was not at all so long ago that men were able, by means of atavistic clairvoyance — as we may call it — to look into the spiritual world, and to have knowledge of its mysteries in a way that was entirely different from the way of to-day.

We need only think how blindly people go through the world to-day; how, if they only wished to do so, they could convince themselves, even externally, on the physical plane that evolution takes place, in the human race.

The significant fact is that during the course of the last three to four centuries, the formerly extant, more atavistic and unconscious clairvoyance has been disappearing. For, naturally, Master Bertram would not have been able to develop Spiritual Science. He merely saw, still saw in the etheric world, what Lucifer

was really like, and then painted him accordingly. It was an unconscious, instinctive clairvoyance.

In order that man should acquire the external form of vision, the old way of looking at the spiritual world had to disappear. But it must be acquired anew by man. And the time must gradually come, only of course, this must be in the sphere of consciousness — when what has been lost, must be striven after anew. For this reason, the way must be prepared by Spiritual Science. People can approach the spiritual world again only if they study Spiritual Science. But this Spiritual Science must really bring an insight into the spiritual world.

To-day it is possible to prove scientifically, as it were how far natural science can bring the world forward. When a scientifically-trained person to-day speaks about such matters, he really speaks about the soul-apparatus, about the bodily instrument of soul-life. Now, if you try to investigate in the descriptions available to-day — they are generally called psychophysiology — even those written by the most significant modern scientists, you will find there, what they have to say about the soul-instrument. You will find that these people express themselves, everywhere, in a most peculiar way. They say, for

instance: — Let us consider the life of impressions and reactions, and the life of conceptual ideas; to this life of impressions and conceptual ideas belongs, in every case, the soul-apparatus. And then they describe what happens in the brain and in the nervous system when a man has impressions or forms conceptions. The parallel bodily process can always be found. But when these scientists approach feeling and the will, they cannot find a parallel bodily process. They cannot find anything.

That a thing like this does not come to light, but remains unnoticed, is due only to the fact that natural science and its rear-guard — we cannot really say rear-guard, because a rearguard is useful, and the monistic rear-guard of natural science is entirely superfluous — because natural science and its rearguard, the Monists, simply crow about the fact that for every process of thought and sensation, a certain physical parallel process is to be found, and that thought and sensation are bound to the brain. But they do not speak of shades of feeling or will. At the most, they speak of shades of feeling — in other words, a certain nuance of conceptual thought. But they do not go as far as feeling and will.

And the honest scientists say: — Our science does not extend as far as feeling and will. You can read for yourselves what I have just said, in the natural-scientific literature. It is possible to corroborate it in all spheres of science. For instance, in the case of Dr. Th. Ziehen, the well known modern psychiatrist and psycho-physiologist — in his book, you can find most easily of all a confirmation of what I have just said. He points out the single processes which correspond to thought and to sensation. He goes as far as certain shades of feeling; but he does not reach to actual feeling and will. Thus he disavows feeling and will. They do not exist at all, he says.

Now could we really find any clearer scientific proof than this, for the fact that natural-scientific thought extends only over the sphere of the temporal — only over that which we lay aside with death; whereas, at the same time, there is something that extends beyond this, living, precisely, as I have indicated, in feeling and will, and yet so far removed from the body that the scientist simply does not find it, indeed he rejects it and disavows it!

This is, accordingly, the reason why the scientists boast that feeling and will do not exist: because they cannot be found by the ordinary science. Indeed, it is

natural science itself, as we see, that proves to us today that feeling and will are not bound to the body as such, like thought and sensation.

This is connected with the fact that our thoughts separate themselves from us; after death they appear spread out, outside of us. Feeling and will remain ours. And out of feeling and will springs forth the power to create the thought-tableau. He who wishes to do so today, can show by means of what is strictly scientific, that feeling and will are not connected with what we call "Nature", but that, on the contrary, they pass out after death, as astral body and Ego, and remain united with the human individuality — kindling themselves to a new consciousness, in the way that I have described, through the fact that what spreads itself out is all etheric, that is, mirrors itself first in the astral body and then in the Ego when the astral body has been laid aside.

This is all as it should be. Modern science does not refute Spiritual Science, but confirms it. It really does confirm it. If it were possible to arouse even a little understanding, it would be seen that, for a right understanding, it is precisely an honest natural science that points to a justification of Spiritual Science, even in all its separate details.

Spiritual Science is, as you see — in view of all that has been said — something which must in our day begin to enter into the development of humanity, which must begin to have a grip on humanity, because otherwise the human race will reach the point where it will understand only the temporal, and when it will know nothing of the eternal, which lives in us. The time will come, when people will first recognise this, and when they will also concern themselves more with the development of their feeling-life. For only through feeling and will do we unite ourselves with the world which is not devoid of thought.

The objection might be made: — Very well, then, you feel the spiritual world, but you do not will it. But no, it is precisely through feeling and will that we are united with the objective thought-world — with the thoughts that live, and which we do not merely think. And just as truly as in the past mankind possessed a power of seeing into the spiritual world, just so truly will it have to win this power again in the future. Man will be able to win it again, however, only if he determines first to enter a little way into the thought-world which is no longer recognised by our generation, as coming from the spiritual world.

In order to attain this, a very great deal of what is rumoured about to-day as concept and percept will have to be corrected. Indeed, it would be hard to believe how thoughtlessly, as a matter of fact, human beings of to-day — allow me to use a paradox — how thoughtlessly human beings think. This really would be hard to believe. They make definitions which they are unshakably convinced are right, and cannot be refuted in any way. It belongs to the task of the spiritual scientist, however, to test all the more carefully what it is that convinces people so unshakably — just because it appears to them to be entirely logical and thus they are convinced of it. What, for instance — they think — could be a better definition than this, when someone is asked, in this modern materialistic Age of ours “What is a true concept?” — that he answers by saying: — “It is a true concept, when I form an inner picture of an object which is actually present, outside in the world. This is then a true picture of an object which exists outside.” In other words, everyone, in our day, would give this definition: “Truth consists in the conformity of a picture which we form in thought, to something actually existing outside.” We can now very easily show, however, if we examine concepts, that true concept has nothing to do with what we usually call by this name — has nothing whatever to do with it, in so

far as it is supposed to be a picture of something having actual existence. It can easily be shown that actual existence goes along quite another path than does the picture which we fancy to be concept. You see, if this were true: that a concept is only true when it conforms with something having actual existence, naturally, then, it would also be true only so long as that which has actual existence verifies it.

Thus a concept might be compared with a portrait which someone has made of a human being. The portrait is good, if it resembles the person in question. Yet it has nothing to do with his being. The fact that the picture corresponds to the person, does not lead to an inner truth in the picture. Imagine to yourself that you have painted the picture of some man who then dies, soon afterwards. At first, the picture corresponded to what was there, but afterwards to what no longer exists. There is no connection between actual existence or life, and the portrait; as far as life is concerned, it is an entirely indifferent matter whether the picture is a true one or not. Such a connection is quite imaginary, when we look at things really logically. The essential thing is to experience things inwardly. It is this inner experience which humanity must again acquire.

In order to acquire this, however — and it is just during these hard, sorrowful days that we can be brought to realise in a special measure how necessary this is — in order to acquire this, it is necessary above all that humanity should acquire again a feeling for Truth, for real Truth.

Materialism gradually estranges us completely from Truth. We have gone astray through materialism — and especially where the idea of Truth is concerned. Compare for yourselves, for instance, the journalistic descriptions of today — and how many people read nothing but the newspapers, nowadays — compare these with the real events, which you may happen to have seen yourself! When you read this again, in the newspapers, you will find that the reporter has written it up in the way that he believes will make an *impression* on his readers. All feeling that such descriptions should correspond to the Truth grows weaker and weaker. And so long as this feeling for Truth does not permeate humanity, the impulse that leads from the sense-world into the spiritual world cannot be awakened to activity in human souls. For, with this want of any concepts of Truth in our thoughts, our concepts become falsified. How often, for instance, do we come across the following case:

Someone writes about Spiritual Science — let us suppose about what I have published in connection with Spiritual Science. He writes about this, and he cannot help saying — owing to his materialistic mentality — that everything is invented, and that it is not permissible to invent such things. And then he continues by investigating the question of how it can be possible for a man to be so fantastic.

As a matter of fact, this article actually appeared not so very long ago. The writer tries to find out how it is possible that a man can be so fantastic! And then he relates *where* this man comes from — in this case, it was I — where he used to live (not his recent abode, but where the writer reports him to have lived) and how it is because of his peculiar race-mixture that he can invent such fantastic things. And then this reporter himself invents the most incredible things, impelled by his materialistic mentality. And here you have an example of what I mean: People simply take hold of lies, and allow truth to become inwardly distorted.

Of course, no direct proof can be supplied for this. Yet what could be more false than to accuse someone of inventing fantastic things, and then to invent the most incredibly fantastic things about him, oneself! If

you will study our modern life carefully, you will find that there is a very widespread lack of any feeling of responsibility, which would see to it that everything one says should correspond to the Reality. Unless we possess this feeling for Truth most intensively, we cannot gain access to the spiritual world. Nor can we understand why we must believe to be true, what Spiritual Science brings down for us as Truth, from the spiritual world.

But our thinking is far too inadequate for a true contemplation of this sort — and we cling too much to our own personal interests, to be able to see how untruthfulness glitters in everything and how its fragments can be found in all the happenings of life.

A true feeling, a true conception of this is what should occupy our thoughts, and should constitute the first preparatory steps in Spiritual Science. Thoughts like these should be, I might say, a kind of conscious preparation for what Man's future really should be. For, the welfare of the human race can become a reality only if our souls become united again with the spirit. Spiritual Science is not something that we seek in the form of a new kind of sensation, but something whereof we know that it *must* arise, because humanity needs it. And we ought to feel indebted, as it were, to

Spiritual Science, if we observe, in a clear and lucid way the course of human evolution.

How much richer we grow, through what Spiritual Science can give us, because the world widens out for us more and more, through the fact that spiritual reality is added to physical reality, in human evolution! Human beings have been more and more cut off, in this materialistic age, from the world in which man lives between death and a new birth. Spiritual Science must give back to them, again, that life which comprises the whole human being — including that part which remains when man no longer possesses a physical body. In this respect, the physical world has nothing to give us.

It can weigh heavily, very heavily, upon our souls — especially just at the present difficult time — to see a volume like the one by Ernst Haeckel, which has just appeared. He calls it “Thoughts of Eternity”. Now, Ernst Haeckel is one of the most distinguished men of our day. This book, “Thoughts of Eternity”, starts out with the present Great War. What is the chief content of this book? The chief content of this newest book by Haeckel, “Thoughts of Eternity”, is expressed in these words: What can this particular war teach us? Thousands and thousands of people die a death of

external violence, without any necessity whatsoever. “Must we not see” — asks Haeckel — “in this very war, the proof for the fact that all thoughts on eternity and infinity are absurd? Does not this same war, which ruins men’s lives through outer chance, such as a bullet, for example — does it not show us that there is nothing beyond ordinary physical life?”

Of course, there will be other people of our day, who will be led to a different kind of thinking about eternity, through these events — to quite the opposite kind of thoughts of eternity, to thoughts which, in any case, call up in us the feeling that those who pass through the portal of death in times such as these continue their tasks for humanity in other worlds, and that the very sacrifice which they make, partly constitutes, in their new life, the starting point for what they have to fulfil when they no longer carry a physical body.

It is possible to prove all sorts of things, through ordinary science: it is possible to prove, for instance, that ordinary science enables man to construct all sorts of excellent kinds of apparatus, which raise the standard of human life and advance human civilisation — in a peaceful sense. Yet this same science can also construct the most terrible things —

for the destruction of human life. External science enables man to construct both good and destructive things, and to prove all sorts of facts.

In order really to penetrate into the world where the eternal lives, there is need for Spiritual Science. And this Spiritual Science — I have already spoken to you about this, at least to some of you — shows us, among other things, and makes it quite clear to us, that those who leave their physical body at an early age, before the ordinary span of life on the physical plane has elapsed, give over their etheric body to the etheric world, and continue to live as individualities. Then, the spirit and the sense of Spiritual Science show us that such an etheric body, which would still have been able to support a physical body for a long time, still contains vital forces, when it is handed over to the etheric world — forces which would have been able to keep the physical body alive for decades. It exists in the etheric world, as illustrated by the example I have already cited to you.

What a human being acquires, through his sacrificial death continues to live in his individuality. It continues to live in him, especially at a time like the present; and we are able to gain an insight into the significance of what is taking place only when we look

at things with our spiritual eyes, through Spiritual Science. Then our attention will be drawn to the fact that the spiritual counterpart of what is now happening on European soil, as the spiritual correlation, the spiritual parallel process of the mighty and sorrowful events taking place on the physical plane, here in Europe — since all physical events are under the guidance of the spiritual world — must flow through physical events, into the future of human evolution.

But this will bear fruit only if human souls, living in physical bodies on the earth, acquire a consciousness of the fact that an active and helping influence is going out to them — from those forces which live in the spiritual world as the result of thousands and thousands of sacrificial deaths: and that they can submit themselves to this influence, in a sense, in order to be able to continue in the future their activity on this earth — united with the dead through that consciousness of the reality of a spiritual world, which can be acquired by the human soul.

This is what Spiritual Science must give to men — also in connection with these events now taking place. And human beings will then be able to render fruitful for the future, in the right way, the spiritual

counterpart of this mightiest of all world-events, and they will be able also to think and to feel, in the right way.

From the courage of fighters,
from the blood of battles,
from the sorrow of those who are left behind,
from a nation's sacrifice,
will ripen spiritual fruit —
if, toward the spirit-kingdom,
souls will spirit-conscious turn.

6. The Moment of Death and the Period Thereafter

THE TIME in which we live reminds us daily and hourly of death, this significant event in human life; it reminds us of man's passage through the portal of death. For only in the light of spiritual science does death become a real event in the true meaning of the word, because spiritual science shows us the eternal forces that are active within us, that pass through births and deaths and take on a special form of existence between birth and death, in order to assume another form of existence after their passage through the portal of death. In the light of spiritual science, death becomes an event, instead of being merely the abstract end of life (only a materialistic world-conception can look upon death as the end of life); it becomes a deep and serious event within the whole compass of human life. Even from our own ranks, dear friends of ours have left us in order to pass through the portal of death, chiefly as a result of the present historical events, but also for other reasons, and so it may perhaps be particularly appropriate just now to say a few things on death, on this great event, and on the facts of human life that are connected with it.

Explanations have often been given in our spiritual-scientific lectures on the life between death and a new birth, so that we were able to gain many essential facts, particularly in regard to this subject. The course which spiritual science has followed up to now will have shown you that in every single case it can only speak of things from one definite standpoint, so that a more accurate knowledge can gradually be acquired by speaking of things repeatedly and throwing light upon them from many points of view. Today I shall therefore add to the facts that you already know in connection with this subject a few things that may be useful to our comprehension of the world as a whole.

Through spiritual science, we consider, to begin with (and that is a good thing), the human being such as he stands before us, here in the physical world, as an expression of his whole being. We must depart first of all from the manner in which the human being presents himself to us in the physical world; and for this reason, I have frequently pointed out that we obtain, as it were, a general view of man's whole being if we contemplate him so that we first take, as a foundation, his physical body which we learn to know externally in the physical world through our senses and the scientific dissection of what we perceive through the senses. We then proceed by studying that

form of organization which we designate as our etheric body: this already possesses a super-sensible character and cannot, therefore, be contemplated with the aid of the ordinary intellect, which is bound to the brain, and is consequently also inaccessible to our ordinary science. The etheric body is an organism having a super-sensible character, concerning which we may say that it was already known to men such as Immanuel Hermann Fichte, son of the great thinker Johann Gottlieb Fichte, to Troxler and others. Indeed, man's etheric body can only be grasped through imaginative knowledge owing to its super-sensible character; but as far as imaginative knowledge is concerned, it *can* be contemplated externally, just as the physical-sensory body can be contemplated externally through our ordinary sensory knowledge.

We then ascend in our contemplation to the astral body. The astral body in man cannot be contemplated in an external-sensory manner in the same way in which we contemplate the physical body through our external senses, or in the same way in which we contemplate our etheric body through our inner sense; the astral body is something that can only be experienced inwardly. We must experience it inwardly, and in order to experience it we must be within it. The same thing applies to the fourth member which must

be grasped in the physical world, to the ego. With these four members of human nature we build up our whole being.

Past lectures showed us that what we designate as man's physical body is a very complicated structure, formed during long periods of development, that passed through the stages of Saturn, the Sun and the Moon; ¹² also the evolution of the Earth contributed to this development of the physical body, from the very beginning of earthly existence up to our time. A complicated process of development therefore built up our physical body.

That form of contemplation which is, to begin with, accessible to us in the physical world merely sees the external aspect of everything that lives within the physical body. Even ordinary science merely sees this external aspect. We might say: our ordinary physical contemplation and ordinary science, in the form in which it now lives in the world, merely know of the physical body as much as we would know of a house if we would only go round it outside, without ever going inside, so that we would never learn to know what it is like inside, nor what people live in it.

Of course, those who stand upon the foundation of ordinary science, in the usual materialistic meaning, will argue: 'We are thoroughly acquainted with the interior of the physical body! We know what it is like, because we have frequently studied the brain inside the skull when dissecting corpses; we have frequently studied the stomach and the heart.' This interior, however, that can thus be studied from outside, this spatial interior, is not what I mean when I speak of man's inner being. Even this spatial interior is nothing but an external thing. Indeed, in the case of the physical body, this spatial interior is far more external than the real spatial interior.

This must sound strange. But our sense-organs — you know this from other descriptions contained in our spiritual science were formed already during the Saturn period and we carry them on the surface of our body. Spatially speaking, they are outside. Nevertheless, they were built by forces that are far more spiritual than those that formed our stomach or everything that exists, spatially speaking, inside our body. What is inside our body is built up by the least spiritual of forces. Strange though it may sound, I must nevertheless point out that we really speak of ourselves in an entirely mistaken manner upside down, we might say. Since we live on the physical

plane, it is natural to speak in that way; nevertheless the way in which we speak of ourselves is quite wrong. We should really designate the skin of our face as our interior, and the stomach as our exterior. This would lead us far closer to the truth! It would lead us closer to the real truth if we were to say: we eat in such a way that we send the food out of us; when we send food into our stomach, we really send it out, we do not send it into our body, as we generally say at the present time. The more our organs lie on the surface, the more spiritual are the forces from which they come; and the more they lie inside our body, the less spiritual are the forces that gave rise to them.

The descriptions that were given so far in our spiritual science enable you to grasp this with a certain ease. If you carefully remember the descriptions of spiritual science, you will no doubt remember what it says in regard to the Moon stage of development, namely, that something split off during the Moon stage of development, and that something also split off during the Earth-development; it went out into the world's spaces from the Saturn, Sun and Moon stages of development. A very strange thing is connected with this splitting-off process, namely, we were turned inside out! Our inside became, our outside and our outside became our inside. During the

Saturn and Sun periods, our human countenance, which is now turned towards the outer world, was really turned towards our inner being. Of course, this was only the case during the early stages of development; but even during a part of the Moon period, during the Moon existence, the foundation of the inner organs which we now possess was still formed from outside. Since that time, we have really been turned inside out, like an overcoat that can be turned. We should bear in mind that many super-sensible facts are connected with our physical body. Its whole structure is super-sensible; the super-sensible world has formed it, and when we look upon the physical body as a whole, it merely shows us its external aspect.

If we now come to the etheric body, we shall find that it is neither visible nor accessible to the physical-sensory contemplation. But when the human being passes through the portal of death, it becomes all the more important. The time through which the human being now passes, the first days after his death, are particularly important as far as the etheric body is concerned. But we must learn to think differently, even in regard to the physical body, if we wish to grasp in the right way all that we encounter after our passage through the portal of death.

You already know (for you can observe this even in the physical world) that when we pass through the portal of death we lay aside our physical body, as we generally say. We lay aside our physical body. Through decomposition or cremation (the only difference between these two processes lies in the length of time that they take up) the physical body is handed over to the elements of the earth. Now we might think that the physical body simply ceases to exist for those who have passed through the portal of death. But this is not the case, in this meaning. For we can hand over to the earth only those parts of our physical body that come from the earth itself. We cannot, however, hand over to the earth that part of our physical body that comes from the Old Moon existence, nor that part which comes from the Old Sun existence or from the Old Saturn existence. For those parts that come from the Old Saturn existence, from the Sun existence, from the Moon existence, and even from a great portion of the Earth existence, are super-sensible forces. These super-sensible forces contained in our physical body, of which only the external part is accessible to our sensory contemplation, as explained just now — where do these super-sensible forces go to after we have passed through the portal of death? As stated, we hand over to the earth, we return to the earth, only that part of our physical body — of that most

wonderful structure which exists in the world, to begin with, as a form — we return to the earth only what the earth has given to the physical body. And where is the other part when we have passed through the portal of death? The other part withdraws from the one that sinks down into the earth, as it were, through the process of decomposition or cremation; the other part is taken up by the whole universe.

If you now think of everything you can at all imagine in the environment of the earth, including the planets and the fixed stars, if you imagine this in the most spiritual form, this spiritually conceived idea would give you the place where the spiritual part of our physical body abides after death. Only a portion of this spiritual part, a portion contained in the element of warmth, separates and remains with the earth. But every other spiritual part of our physical body is borne out into the spaces of the universe, into the whole cosmos.

Where do we go to when we abandon our physical body? Where do we dive down? Through our death, we go out with lightning speed into that which forms our physical body from out of all the super-sensible forces. Imagine that all the constructive forces that have worked upon your physical body, ever since the time

of Old Saturn, were to stretch themselves into infinity in order to prepare the place in which you live between death and a new birth. Between birth and death, all this is drawn together, I might say, within the space enclosed by your skin; it is merely drawn together.

When we are outside our physical body, we experience something that is of the utmost importance for the whole subsequent life between death and a new birth. I have often mentioned this. This experience is of opposite character to the corresponding experience during our life here, upon the physical plane. During our life upon the physical plane we cannot look back as far as the hour of our birth; we cannot look back upon it with the aid of our ordinary cognitive power. There is not one person who can remember his own birth, nor look back upon it. The only thing we know is that we were born, in the first place, because we have been told so by others, and in the second place, because all the other human beings that came to the earth after us were also born, so that we infer from this that we, too, were born. But we cannot pass through the real experience of our own birth.

Exactly the opposite is the case with the corresponding experience after death. Whereas, during our physical life, the immediate contemplation of our birth can never rise up before our soul, the moment of death stands before our soul throughout our life between death and a new birth, if we only look upon it spiritually. We must realize that we then look upon the moment of death from the other side. Here, on earth, death has a terrifying aspect only because we look upon it as a kind of dissolution, as an end. But when we look back upon the moment of death from the other side, from the spiritual side, then death continually appears to us as a victory of the spirit, as the Spirit that is extricating itself from the physical. It then appears as the greatest, most beautiful and significant event. Moreover, this experience kindles that which constitutes our ego-consciousness after death. Throughout the time between death and a new birth we have an ego-consciousness that not only resembles but far exceeds that which we have here during our physical life. We would not have this ego-consciousness if we could not look back incessantly, if we would not always see — but from the other side, from the spiritual side — that moment in which our spiritual part extricated itself from the physical. We know that we are an ego only because we know that we have died, that our spiritual has freed itself from

our physical part. When we cannot contemplate the moment of death, beyond the portal of death, then our ego-consciousness after death is in the same case as our physical ego-consciousness here upon the earth when we are asleep. Just as we know nothing of our physical ego-consciousness when we are asleep, so we know nothing concerning ourselves after death if we do not constantly have before us the moment of death. It stands before us as one of the most beautiful and loftiest moments.

You see, even in this case we must set about thinking in an entirely different way of the spiritual world than of the sensory-physical world. If we indolently remain with the thoughts which we have in connection with the physical-sensory world, it will be impossible for us to grasp the spiritual in any way more precisely. For the most important thing after death is that the moment of death is viewed from the other side. This kindles our ego-consciousness on the other side. Here, in the physical world, we have, as it were, one side of ego-consciousness; after death, we have the other side of ego-consciousness. I explained just now where we should look for the super-sensible part of our physical body after death. We should seek this physical body in the shape of a relation of forces, of an organism of forces, as a cosmos of forces, within

the whole world. This physical essence prepares the place through which we must pass between death and a new birth.

Within our physical body, which is so small in comparison with the whole world, our skin really encloses a microcosm, something that is, in reality, a whole world. Trivially speaking, I might say that this world is merely rolled together and that afterwards it unrolls again and fills out the universe, with the exception of one tiny space that always remains empty.

Between death and a new birth we really exist everywhere in the world; we live in it with that part which, here on earth, lies at the foundation of our physical body in the form of super-sensible forces. We are everywhere, except in that one place. This remains empty. It is the space enclosed by our skin, the space which we take up in the physical world. This remains empty.

Yet we constantly look upon this empty space. That is to say, we look upon our own self, from outside; we look into a concavity. This remains empty. It remains empty to such an extent that a fundamental feeling rises up in connection with it. Namely, we do not

contemplate things in an abstract manner, we do not simply stare at them, but our contemplation is connected with a powerful inner life-experience, with a mighty experience. It is connected with the fact that when we contemplate this emptiness, a feeling rises up in us, a feeling that accompanies us throughout our life between death and a new birth and constitutes a great deal of what we generally designate as our life beyond. It is the feeling that there is something in the world which must again and again be filled out by us. And then we acquire the feeling: 'I exist in the world for a definite purpose, which I, alone, can fulfil.' Thus we learn to know our place within the world. We feel that we are building stones, without which the world could not exist. This is what arises through the contemplation of that empty space. When we gaze at it, we are overcome by a feeling telling us that we stand within the world as something that forms part of it.

All this is connected with the further development of our physical body. The more elementary forms of description only enable us to explain schematically, as it were, a reality of the spiritual world that really requires to be explained in the form of images. In order to rise gradually to those concepts which

penetrate more deeply into the reality of the spiritual world, we must first have those images.

We know that our next experience is a kind of retrospective memory that lasts for days. But this retrospective memory is inappropriately designated (but nevertheless with a certain right) as a retrospective memory, for we have before us now, for a few days, something that resembles a tableau, or a panorama, woven out of all we have experienced during our past life. It does not, however, rise up in the same way in which an ordinary memory rises up in our physical body. You see, the memories that live in our physical body are of such a kind that we draw them out of our memory. Memory is a force that is connected with our physical body. Our recollections rise up in the form of thoughts; through the power of memory we draw them out successively within the stream of time. But the retrospective memory after death is of such a kind that everything that occurred during our early life now surrounds us simultaneously, as if it were a panorama. Our life-experiences now rise up in the form of imaginations. We can only say that we now live, for whole days, within these experiences. What we experienced just before death and what we experienced during our childhood stand before us simultaneously in powerful pictures. A panorama of

our life, a life-picture, stands before us and it reveals, simultaneously, in a woof woven out of the ether, what normally occurs successively within the stream of time. Everything that we now see before us lives in the ether.

We feel, above all, that we are now surrounded by something that is alive. Everything within it lives and weaves. And then we experience that it resounds spiritually, that it shines forth spiritually and gives warmth spiritually.

We know that this life-tableau disappears after a few days. What makes it cease and what is the essence of this life-tableau?

If we study the true essence of this life-tableau, we must really say: everything that we have experienced during our life is woven into it. How did we experience these things? In the form of thoughts connected with our experiences. Everything that we experienced in the form of thoughts and concepts is contained in this picture of our life.

In order to grasp this concretely, let us now say: during our earthly life we lived together with another human being, we spoke with him and, in speaking with him, his thoughts communicated with our

thoughts. We received love from him, we allowed his soul to influence us and experienced all this inwardly. In this manner we shared the experiences of the person we lived with. He lived and we lived, and through him we experienced something. What we experienced through him now appears to us woven into this etheric life-tableau. It is the same thing that constitutes our memories. Think, for instance, of the moment, ten or twenty years ago, when you first met him and experienced something through him. Imagine that this memory now rises up before you, but that you do not remember it in the same way in which you would remember things during your ordinary life. The ordinary memories are grey and faded, but now you remember things in such a way that they rise up within you as LIVING memories; you see your friend standing before you in exactly the same way in which he stood before you during the real experience.

Here, on earth, we are often very dreamy and what we experience upon the physical plane in a living and hearty manner becomes dulled and loses its vitality. But when we pass through the portal of death, when our experiences rise up before us in the life-tableau, they are no longer dull and lifeless but exist there in the original freshness and vitality which they possessed when we passed through them during our

earthly life. In this form they become interwoven with our life-tableau; in this form we experience them after death for whole days.

In regard to the physical world, we have the impression that our physical body falls away from us when we die; in a similar way we now have the impression that our etheric body too falls away from us after a certain number of days, but it does not fall away from us in the same way in which our physical body falls away, for it becomes interwoven with the whole universe, with the whole world. It lives in the world and stamps its impressions upon the whole world while we are experiencing our life-tableau. What we thus have before us in the form of a life-tableau has now been handed over to the external world: it lives in our surroundings and has been taken over by the world.

During those days we have an important and impressive experience in this connection. For, after death, our experiences do not merely resemble the memories which we have during our earthly life but they are in every way substance for new experiences. Even the manner in which we grasp our ego, through the fact that we constantly look back upon our death, is a new experience, for our earthly senses do not

enable us to experience anything similar. This can only be grasped through the knowledge of initiation. But even what we experience during the days in which we are surrounded by this life-tableau, by this etheric life that frees itself from us and becomes interwoven with the universe, even what we experience in this manner is impressive and lofty, it is an overwhelming and powerful experience for the human soul.

You see, during our physical life on earth, we face the world: we face the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. They enable us to experience what our senses are able to experience, what our intellect, that is bound to the brain, obtains through the sense-experiences, what our feelings, that are connected with our vascular system, experience: we experience all these things here on earth.

But in reality, and from a loftier standpoint, we human beings are extremely great dunces (excuse this expression!), gigantic dunces, between birth and death. In regard to the wisdom of the great world, we are fearfully stupid if we believe that here on earth, when we experience something in the manner described and bear it along in the form of memories, everything is finished; we are fearfully stupid if we think that our experiences are finished when we take

them up in this manner as human beings. For while we experience things, while we form concepts and feelings rise up in our experiences, the whole world of the Hierarchies is active within this process through which we acquire our experiences; the Hierarchies live and weave in it.

When we face a human being and look into his eyes, then the spirits of the Hierarchies, the Hierarchies themselves, the work of the Hierarchies, live in our gaze and in what is sent towards us through the gaze of the other human being. Our experience merely shows us the external aspect of things for, in reality, the Gods work within our experiences. We think that we only live for our own sake; yet the Gods work out something through our experiences; they obtain from them something that they can weave into the world. We form ideas, we have feeling experiences; the Gods take them up and communicate them to their world. And when we die, we know that the purpose of our life is to give the Gods the opportunity to spin out of our life this woof coming from our etheric body and to hand it over to the whole universe. The Gods gave us the chance to live in order that they might spin out something for themselves, thus enriching the world.

This is an overwhelming thought. Every one of our strides is the external expression of an event connected with the Gods; it forms part of that woof which the Gods use for their plan of the world and which they leave to us only until we pass through the portal of death. After our death they take it away from us and incorporate with the universe these, our human, destinies. Our human destinies are, at the same time, the deeds of Gods, and the form in which they appear to us human beings is merely their outward aspect. This is the significant, important and essential fact which we should bear in mind.

What we acquire inwardly, during our earthly life, through the fact that we can think and have feelings, whom does this belong to after our death? Whom does it now belong to? After our death it belongs to the universe. We look back upon our death, and in the same way we now look back with that part which remains to us, namely, with our astral body and our ego, upon that which has become interwoven with the universe, with the world. During our earthly life we bear within us what thus becomes interwoven with the universe after our death; we bear it within us as our etheric body. But now it is spun up and becomes interwoven with the world. And we now look upon it, we contemplate it. After our death, we look upon it in

the same way in which we experience it inwardly here on earth. It now lives in the world outside. Just as here on earth we see stars, mountains, rivers, so after our death we see, in addition to what our physical body has become with lightning speed, also that part of our own experiences which has become interwoven with the universe. That part of our own experiences which now incorporates with the whole world-structure is reflected in those members which we still possess, in our astral body and in our ego; it is reflected in the same way in which the external world is reflected here on earth in our physical organs and through our physical being.

While this is reflected in us we acquire something that we cannot acquire during our earthly life, something that we shall only acquire later on, during the Jupiter period, in the form of a more external, physical impression. Now we acquire it spiritually, through the fact that our etheric being outside makes an impression upon us. This impression which is thus made upon us is, to begin with, a spiritual one; it is made in the form of images; in its image-character it is, however, the prototype of what we shall one day possess upon Jupiter: namely, the Spirit-Self.

A Spirit-Self is therefore born to us through the fact that our etheric part becomes interwoven with the universe; this Spirit-Self comes to birth spiritually, not in the form in which we shall have it later on, upon Jupiter.

The etheric body has now detached itself, so that we now have the astral body, the ego and the Spirit-Self.

The astral body and the ego therefore remain to us from our earthly life.

You already know that our astral body, in the earthly form in which it was subjected to us, remains with us for a long time after death. The astral body remains with us because it is permeated with all those things that only pertain to the earthly-human life, and because it cannot immediately expel this. We now pass through a time during which we can only cast off little by little what has become of our astral body as a result of our earthly life.

You see, here on earth we can only experience, in regard to the astral body, one half at the most of everything through which we pass. We really experience only half of what takes place in every one of our experiences. Let us take an example. Imagine —

this applies both to good and to evil thoughts and actions — but let us take as an example an evil action. Imagine that you say something bad to another person and that your words hurt him. When we say something unkind we only experience that part which concerns us personally; we only experience the feelings that prompted us to say those evil words. This is the soul-impression which we gather when we say bad and unkind things. But the other person to whom we addressed our unkind words has an entirely different impression; he has, as it were, the other half of the impression and feels hurt. The second half of the impression lives in him. What we ourselves experience during our physical life on earth is one thing, and what the other person experiences is another thing.

Now imagine the following. After our death, when we pass backwards through our life, we must once more live through everything that other people, outside, have experienced through us. As we go backwards through our life, we experience the effects of our thoughts and actions. Between death and a new birth we therefore pass through our life by going through it backwards. And when we have gone back as far as our birth, we are ripe for the moment when also that part of our astral body may be cast off which is permeated

with earthly things. It abandons us, and a new state of existence begins for us when we have cast off our astral body.

The astral body always kept us connected, I might say, with the earth; it maintained this connection in all our experiences. When we pass through our astral body — not in a dreamy condition, but by living through our earthly experiences backwards — we are still connected with our earthly life; we still stand within our earthly existence. Now that we have cast off — but this is not the right expression; it is, however, impossible to use another one — now that we have cast off our astral body, we are quite free of all that pertains to the earth and we live in the real spiritual world.

A new experience now sets in. This casting-off of the astral body is, again, merely one aspect of the whole experience; the other aspect is an entirely different one. When we have passed through our earthly experiences and no longer have our astral body, we feel, as it were, inwardly filled and permeated with — we cannot say with material — but with spirit; then we really feel that we are in the spiritual world and the spiritual world rises up within us. In former times it rose up before us in the outer world when we

contemplated the universe and saw our own etheric body interwoven with the universe. But now it rises up within us; we now experience it inwardly. And our ego rises up within us as a prototype of what we shall possess physically only upon Venus; our ego rises up as a prototype of the Life-Spirit.

We now consist of Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit and ego.

Just as here on earth we live in a rather dreamy state from our birth until that moment of our childhood in which we acquire self-consciousness, which is the earliest moment of life that we can recall, so we now lead a form of life that is fully conscious, indeed more conscious and higher than our earthly life. However, we experience a purely spiritual life, only when we have detached ourselves from our astral body, from our astral life, retaining only that part of our astral which permeates us inwardly. Consequently, we are, from that time onwards, spirits among spirits.

Now another important and essential experience rises up. During our life in the physical world we carry on our work, do this or that thing and have experiences in connection with all these things. Our experiences are, however, not limited to the physical world; simultaneously and in connection with them,

we also experience something else. Although the expression which I shall now use for these simultaneous experiences is just an ordinary, more general expression, let me nevertheless use this word; while we experience these things, we grow tired, we get used up. This is constantly the case: we grow tired. Although our weariness is eliminated for our next state of consciousness through the fact that we sleep, or rather, through the fact that we rest during our sleep, this elimination, or adjustment, is nevertheless only a partial one, for we know, of course, that during our life we gradually become used up, we grow older, and our strength gradually dwindles. Consequently, we also grow tired in a wider sense. When we grow older, we know that we cannot adjust everything by sleeping. Thus we wear out our strength, we grow tired, during our life on earth.

Indeed, we are now able to view this problem from another aspect. After our preceding explanation, we can now advance this problem in a different way; we can ask: why do the Gods allow us to grow weary? The fact that here on earth we get tired and wear out our strength gives us something that is really most significant for our whole life. Let us, however, grasp the idea that we get tired, in a wider sense than the usual one. Let us place it clearly before our soul.

You will grasp it best of all if you imagine it in the following way. Ask any one of those present: do you know anything concerning the interior of your head? Probably only a person who is suffering from a headache would answer that at the present moment he does know something concerning the interior of his head. He alone would feel what the inside of his head is like; all the others would not feel it.

We can feel our organs only when they are not quite in order; we are then to some extent aware of their existence through our feelings. As a rule, we only have a more general feeling of our physical body, and this feeling increases when anything is out of order. But when we only have this general feeling, we know very little concerning the interior of our body. Those who suffer from bad headaches know a little more concerning the inside of their head than an anatomist, who is merely acquainted with the head's vessels. In growing more and more tired, during the course of our life, we acquire an ever stronger feeling in regard to the body's interior, its spatial interior.

Consider the fact that the more weary we grow, the more the infirmities of life arise, for instance the infirmities of old age. Our life consists in that we gradually begin to feel and to sense our physical body.

We learn to sense this physical part of our being because it becomes hardened within us and because it pushes itself, as it were, into our being. Just because it develops so slowly we regard it, I might say, as an insignificant feeling. Its real significance could be gauged if we could feel (excuse this trivial expression, but it conveys what I wish to say) in the pink of health, like an exuberantly healthy child, and immediately afterwards, for the sake of comparison, like an old man of 80 or 85, whose limbs have grown fragile. This would enable us to experience that feeling more strongly, simply because it develops so slowly. Yet growing weary is a real process. At first, it does not exist at all, for a child is full of exuberant vitality. But later on, fatigue gradually begins to drown the vital forces, and then the process of getting tired breaks through. We have the possibility of growing weary, and during this process (even though it only gives us, let us say, a dim feeling of our body's inner structure), during this process something takes place within us, something really takes place within us.

Our life in the physical world only shows us the outer aspect of deep, significant and lofty mysteries. The fact that this dim, insignificant feeling of growing weary accompanies us throughout our life, so that we are able to feel the inner structure of our body, is

merely the outer aspect of something that becomes interwoven with us; it is wonderfully woven out of pure wisdom, a complete woof of pure wisdom.

While we thus grow weary during our life and begin to experience ourselves inwardly, a delicate knowledge becomes interwoven with us, a knowledge of the wonderful constitution of our organs, of our inner organs. Our heart grows tired, yet this weariness means that a knowledge of the heart's structure becomes interwoven with us, a knowledge of how the heart is built from out of the universe. Our stomach gets tired — most of all, when we spoil it by eating too much — yet during this process that tires the stomach, an image of wisdom from out of the cosmos is woven into us, and this image shows us how the stomach is built up.

The lofty, wonderful structure of our organism, of this great work of art, arises within us in the form of an image. But this image only comes to life when we cast off that part of our astral body which is bound to the earth. What now lives within us, what now fills us as Life-Spirit, is the wisdom connected with our own being, it is the wisdom connected with the wonderful structure of our inner being and this wisdom now lives in us.

Now begins a time in which we compare, as it were, what fills us in the form of Life-Spirit from out of the wisdom of our inner being with the etheric woof that has already been woven into the universe. Our task is now to compare how one thing fits in with the other, and we then build up, in the form of an image, our inner being, we give it the shape which it should have during our next incarnation.

This is how we begin, but little by little our life approaches the Midnight, which you will find described in one of the Mystery Plays, in *The Soul's Awakening*. Particularly after the World-Midnight we are engaged in a work that consists in that we now participate in the world's creative work; we call into life what we afterwards enjoy here. During our life between death and a new birth we share in the work, we participate in the weaving of the Gods' images. We have the privilege of sharing in a divine task, in what the Gods aimed at when they placed man into the world. We are allowed to prepare our next incarnation.

Of course, this is not only connected with processes that exclusively and egoistically concern our own being, for all manner of other processes take place as well. This may be evident particularly from the following:

If we gradually succeed in experiencing, in spiritual contemplation, this wonderful process — which is, above all, far higher than the one which takes place on earth, when summer and winter alternate, or when the sun rises and sets and when all that takes place which occurs in the form of earthly work — then something occurs in the spiritual world finally leading to our earthly incarnation, to human existence. This is a lofty, heavenly process, which has not only an external significance but a deep significance for the whole world.

We also encounter something else when we contemplate this process. It may sound strange to say this but, you see, the higher mysteries at first necessarily appear strange in the light of a physical-sensory contemplation. What rises up before our soul in connection with these mysteries must move us. The more it moves us, the better it is, for these things, the very nature of these things, should not approach our soul so that we remain dry and indifferent. They should not be taken up in such a way that we remain indifferent, dry and cool; but they should, instead, give us a soul-impression of the loftiness and greatness of the divine-spiritual world.

We can say: if anybody would undertake to present a spiritual science in such a dry way that it does not take hold of our whole being, and so that we do not gain an impression of the loftiness and greatness of the divine-spiritual that pulses and weaves through the world — if, after all these descriptions, we would live on indifferently and dryly, then we would be born without heads, in accordance with the present conditions of the world and in spite of everything we know! We would be born without heads! The structure of our head is something that we are unable to build. In its whole structure the human head is such a lofty image of the universe that the human being would be unable to form it, even with the aid of that life-wisdom which is woven into him; he would be unable to prepare it for the next incarnation. All the divine Hierarchies must co-operate in this work. Your head, this slightly irregular and somewhat transformed sphere, is a real microcosm, a true image of the great world-sphere. Within it lives, within it is collected, everything that exists outside in the universe. All the forces that are active in the different Hierarchies co-operate in order to produce the head. And when we begin to shape our next incarnation, from out the wisdom which we collected during the process of growing weary, all the Hierarchies co-operate and influence this activity in order to embody in us, as an

image of the whole wisdom of the Gods, what afterwards becomes our head.

While all this occurs, our physical, hereditary stream is being prepared generations ahead here upon the earth. Just as after our death we can only hand over to the earth what comes from the earth, so our parents and grand-parents only give us that part of our being which pertains to the earth. Our earthly part is merely our exterior; it is merely the external expression within this earthly part. Woven into it is, in the first place, everything that we ourselves are able to weave in the manner described, and what all the Hierarchies of the Gods weave, before we gain a connection (through conception) with that which enwraps us and clothes us about when we enter the physical plane.

I explained to you that the more of this lofty knowledge we take up in our feelings the better it will be for us. Just consider the fact: we use our head. In so far as we live in materialism, we generally have not the slightest idea that whole Hierarchies of Gods are at work in order to produce our head, in order to mould that which lies, spiritually, at the foundation of our head, so that we are able to live. If we grasp this, in the meaning of a spiritual-scientific knowledge, it

will spontaneously be filled with feelings of gratitude and thankfulness towards the whole universe.

Consequently, what we acquire through spiritual science should incessantly continue to increase and raise our feelings. In the sphere of spiritual science, our sentient life should more and more hold pace with our cognitive work. It is not good to remain behind with our feelings. Whenever we learn to know a new and higher portion of spiritual science, we should be able to unfold, I might say, more and more reverent feelings towards the world's mysteries, which finally lead to the mysteries of man. A true progress in spiritual science really lies in this purifying, spiritual warmth of our feelings.

Let me mention one more thing, because it completes all that we have contemplated in this lecture. Here, in the physical world, we gradually grow accustomed to life by having, to begin with, the dull consciousness of childhood. At first we only recognize our mother and, little by little, we learn to know other people. As we grow accustomed to life in the physical world, we believe that we are constantly coming across new people. As far as our physical consciousness is concerned this is, in fact, true. But when we pass through the portal of death we have a

real, true connection with all the souls that we encountered during our earthly life. They rise up again before our spiritual eye. The souls with whom we were connected during our earthly life and that crossed the portal of death before us, we find these souls, as it were. The words 'to find' really applies to physical conditions, but we may use it here to define that living way in which souls approach other souls. This 'finding' of the souls that crossed the portal of death before us should, however, be imagined in such a way that we approach them, as it were, in an opposite manner from the one in which we approach human beings here on the physical plane.

On the physical plane we encounter human beings so that we first approach them physically, and then we gradually become acquainted with their inner being. Their inner being unfolds only when we penetrate into their inner life. Hence, what we experience inwardly in connection with a human being is the result of that which develops from out of our own inner life. When we ourselves have crossed the portal of death and encounter the souls that have passed through the portal of death before us, we know to begin with: there is that particular soul. We can feel it, we know that it is there. Now we must, however, surrender our whole inner being to the first impression that arises, to the

first most abstract impression. Here on earth we should allow other human beings to exercise their influence upon us; but in the spiritual world we must surrender our inner being, and we must now build up the image, the imagination, ourselves. The imaginative element, what we can look upon, this we must gradually build up. You may have an idea of the soul's experiences after death if you imagine that you do not see it all, but that you take hold of it ... and as you gradually encompass it with your grasp, you form an image, you build up an image for yourself. You must therefore build up in inner activity the image of the soul whom you encounter. You realize, as it were: 'I am now facing a soul — what soul is it? It is the soul ...' (and this knowledge rises out of your own soul) 'towards whom I had the feelings of a son towards his mother.' And you begin to feel: 'I experience myself together with this soul.' Now you begin to build its spiritual form. You must be active within it, and then it develops into an image. Through the fact that you build this image together with the other soul, you are united with that dead person even before you begin to form its spiritual shape. In this manner you are united with everything with which you were united during your earthly life, that is to say, you now experience these things in their own world. You must discover them by awakening within you the power of vision, so

that you may look upon them, but this requires activity on your part.

It is not the same with souls that still dwell in their physical body, with souls that are still alive when we die. Even here on earth we encounter them in the form of images. After death we look down upon them on the earth and do not need to build up their image, for they already face us as images. The souls of those still on the earth may of course weave into these images something that can become spiritual warmth and nourishment for the dead, namely, the image which they are able to form through their thoughts for the dead, through their lasting love and memory, or — we know this, as spiritual scientists — by their reading something to the dead.

You see, all this extends the human gaze so that it penetrates, really penetrates, into the real world. If this rises up before our soul, we begin to realize how little we know of the spiritual world. This was not always the case. Only the completely materialistic people of modern times boast of the great extent of their knowledge. But we know that in the past human beings were clairvoyant and that this ancient, atavistic clairvoyance was lost only because certain qualities had to be acquired which disappeared in the

midst of an existence connected with a materialistic world. If a real materialist, a thoroughly materialistic thinker, approaches us, he will, of course, say: 'It is nonsense to speak of an ancient clairvoyance, or that people had a special knowledge in the past.' But if we would only open our physical eyes a little as we pass through the world, we would very soon discover the falsity of such an argument! It is not even so long ago that people used to know more than they do at the present time.

You know, for we have often considered this matter — but let me mention it again at the conclusion of this lecture — that Lucifer and Ahriman have a share in our spiritual existence. We also know that in the Bible Lucifer is symbolized as a Serpent, as the Serpent on the Tree. The physical serpent, such as we see it today, and as modern painters always paint it when they depict the Paradise Scene, is not a real Lucifer; it is only his outer image, his physical image. The real Lucifer is a being that remained behind during the Moon-stage of evolution. He cannot be seen upon the earth among physical objects. If a painter wishes to paint Lucifer's real aspect he would have to paint him so that he can be grasped as an etheric form, through a kind of inner clairvoyant form of contemplation. He would then appear in the shape in which he works

upon us; he would show that he is not connected with our head or with our organism in so far as these are exclusively formed by the earth, but that he is connected with the continuation of our head, with the spinal cord. A painter who knows something through spiritual science would therefore paint Adam and Eve, the Tree, and on the Tree the Serpent, but this serpent would only be a symbol and it would have a human head. If we were to come across such a painting today, we would assume that the painter has, of course, been able to paint this picture through spiritual science.

Probably such a painting may even be found here in Leipzig; but people do not go about with open eyes, they go through the world with bandaged eyes. In the Art Gallery of Hamburg there is a painting of the Middle Ages by Master Bertram, setting forth the Paradise Scene. In that painting, the Serpent on the Tree is painted correctly, as described just now. That picture can be seen there. But other painters have also painted the Paradise Scene in that way. What may we gather from this? That in the Middle Ages people still knew this, they knew it to the extent of being able to paint it. In other words: it is not so long ago that human beings were pushed completely on to the physical plane.

The course of man's spiritual history as related by materialistic thinkers, is, after all, nothing but an outer deception, because they think that man always had the aspect which he assumed in the course of the past few centuries, whereas it is not so long ago that he used to look into the spiritual world with the aid of his ancient clairvoyance. He had to abandon the spiritual world because he was not free, and in order to acquire full freedom and his ego-consciousness it was necessary that he should leave the spiritual world. Now he must once more find his way into the spiritual world.

Spiritual science therefore prepares something very important and essential: namely, that we may once more penetrate livingly into the spiritual world. Again and again let us conjure up in our soul the necessity of feeling that this small number of men that is now living in the very midst of a materialistic world and is led through its karma to the possibility of grasping mankind's most important task for the future — that this small number of human beings is called upon to fulfil important, most important, tasks through its soul-life. We should realize without any pride, we should realize modestly and humbly, the great difference between a soul that is gradually finding its way into the spiritual world, and all the people outside, who

have not the slightest idea of this, who are, above all, not willing to have any idea of it. This fact should not merely arouse in us discouraging and painful feelings, but produce feelings that incite us to continue our work with increasing energy and to work faithfully within the stream of spiritual science, to which we were led through our karma.

When we were together last I also mentioned that when a human being passes through the portal of death before having lived through the whole of his life, then that part which is given to him in the form of an etheric body has not been used up completely. When a human being passes through the portal of death in his youth, then his etheric body might still have worked for years upon his physical body. But these forces do not get lost; they are still there. I also mentioned that in the present time, through the fact that every day and every hour death so numerously approaches mankind, many, many etheric bodies that might still have worked for a long time upon their physical bodies here on the physical plane are handed over to the spiritual-etheric world and hover in it. The forces that might, for decades, have provided for the physical body, become spiritual forces that co-operate in the spiritual development of humanity. Thus a time will come when these forces that constitute these

etheric bodies, can be used for the spiritual progress of humanity; but this time will only come if here on earth there will be human souls who are able to understand this.

When the terrible events of the present shall have passed over the earth and there will be peace once more, then the souls of those who are still living on the earth in human bodies will have the possibility of grasping something of the fact that all those who have gone into the spiritual world before their time have their etheric bodies in that world and that they can ray their forces into the earth. It will be necessary that this fact be grasped by these souls. These souls can then co-operate in that spiritual progress which is rendered possible particularly through the many deaths of self-sacrifice.

Imagine what it would mean if spiritual science were to disappear, and if no one were to have any comprehension for all that is being prepared in the spiritual world through these deaths of self-sacrifice! Imagine what this would mean! In that case, all those forces would become the property of Beings who would use them for other purposes than those for which they should be used, in accordance with the

plan and resolution of the Gods who follow the right course of development.

This is an admonition that also comes from the events of our time, an admonition to the effect that we should stand fully within all that which constitutes the spiritual world. For even these events of our time have their spiritual aspect. What they reveal outwardly, in the form of blood, death and sacrifices, is the external expression of an inner spiritual course of events, which should, however, be grasped in the right spirit.

Of this I wish to remind you again and again, with the words that conclude our present considerations:

From the courage of the fighters,
From the blood of battles,
From the sufferings of the abandoned,
From the nation's deeds of sacrifice,
Shall grow out a spiritual fruit,
If souls lead, in spirit-consciousness,
Their hearts and minds into the spirit-realm.

7. How Can the Destitution of Soul in Modern Times Be Overcome?

The truths we look for in spiritual science should not be dead facts, but should bring with them understanding of such a vital kind that it finds entrance into life in all circumstances and at every point. Taken in the abstract, as is often the case at present, spiritual science may seem to offer a diluted and unproductive kind of knowledge, and it is natural that people who know very little about it should be induced to ask: What, after all, is the use of learning that man consists of such and such parts; that humanity has developed, and will develop further, through different epochs of culture, and so on? Those who feel that a realistic attitude is demanded by modern life find spiritual science unprofitable. And it is often applied in an unprofitable way, even by its most devoted adherents.

Nevertheless, spiritual science itself is infinitely alive, and is something which in the course of time can and must bring life into our most external concerns. I should like to make this clear today by a particular example. Most of us know that our present age was preceded by the so-called fourth post-

Atlantean culture epoch, during which the most important peoples were the Greeks and Romans; that the following centuries down to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries continued to be influenced by impulses preceding from that epoch; and that since the fifteenth century mankind has been living in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, into which we ourselves in our present incarnation have been born and in which humanity will be living for many hundreds of years to come. We know furthermore that in man in the fourth post-Atlantean period of civilisation — the Graeco-Roman epoch — was built up pre-eminently the so-called intellectual soul through external culture and work and that cultivation of the consciousness soul is our present task. What does the cultivation of the consciousness soul mean? This abstract statement, rightly understood, contains the destiny of mankind for our entire fifth post-Atlantean period. In order that the consciousness soul may be brought to expression, the various peoples of this period of culture should work together. All the conditions and circumstances of life proclaim this truth; on all sides we find it confirmed that our age stands for the development of the consciousness soul.

Human life was completely different in the preceding Graeco-Roman period when, according to

the stage of development mankind had reached, the faculties of intellect and of feeling were bestowed upon them. Intellect covers a wide field; today this is not sufficiently understood. In their soul-life the Greeks and Romans were dependent upon it in a different way from ourselves in the fifth post-Atlantean period. They received the intellect, in so far as they needed to make use of it, “ready-made”, as a natural tendency of their stage of development; there was no need to cultivate it as we must do at present, and as will be increasingly necessary in the further course of the fifth post-Atlantean period — it developed as a natural tendency. The child grew up, and as his natural tendencies developed, the natural intellect — in a certain sense — developed with them. Growing up in ordinary conditions in a particular incarnation he either possessed an intellect, or he did not. The latter case was considered pathological, or at any rate abnormal, out of the common.

And so it was with heart-and-feeling. Appropriately to the fourth post-Atlantean period heart-and-feeling developed. And though history tells us little of such things, it is nevertheless true that two people meeting for the first time knew how to tune in to each other. In this respect there is a great difference between the preceding centuries down to the fifteenth century, and

our own time. People, then, did not pass each other by with the complete indifference often shown nowadays. At present we are slow, as a rule, to make friends. We must know a great deal about each other before confidence can be established. But what is now only to be arrived at after long acquaintance — if at all — in former centuries, particularly during the Graeco-Roman period of civilisation, could be won at a stroke. In virtue of their respective individualities people were drawn rapidly together, without so much need to exchange feelings and thoughts. Acquaintance was quickly made, in so far as it might be good for the two persons concerned, or necessary to a group of people forming themselves into a community. Heart-and-feeling in the one could still reach out more spiritually and make immediate contact with heart-and-feeling in the other. Up to the present, through the medium of our senses, we can still accurately distinguish the colours, and so forth, of plants; but it will no longer be possible to do this spontaneously in the seventh post-Atlantean epoch when learning to know nature will necessitate special conditions. And there is a resemblance between our actual connection with plants and human connections in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. We must remember that this kind of feeling-and-heart connection was well adapted to that age, but a very different network of feelings and

sensations spans the world of today. In the fourth post-Atlantean epoch human relationships and undertakings depended to the greatest possible extent upon personal contacts. The art of printing which has done so much up to now, and will do more and more in the future, to establish impersonal relationships, belongs to the fifth post-Atlantean epoch; and modern terms of intercourse are such that, fundamentally speaking, connections formed at a stroke are no longer even beneficial, and people can only approach one another on far more impersonal grounds.

Towards this, modern man is developing; he is no longer possessed of a ready-made heart-and-feeling with its spontaneous reactions, nor of a penetrating intellect, but impelled by the consciousness soul to develop something far more detached, more individual, more dependent upon egoism, upon human loneliness inherent in the organisation of his own body, than was the intellectual soul or mind soul. Through the consciousness soul man is much more an individual, a solitary traveler through the world. And the tendency people now show to withdraw into themselves is becoming [a] more and more pronounced characteristic of our time. The hallmark of the consciousness soul is the urge towards an isolated

life, secluded from the rest of mankind. Hence the difficulty of getting to know one another, especially of establishing confidence, without the transition period of formal acquaintanceship.

The significance of all this becomes clearer if we give due weight to the spiritual-scientific truth that in the present age we are not thrown together by chance with other people. That the path of life brings us into contact with certain people and not with others depends upon the working out of individual karma. For we have entered upon a period of human evolution which brings man's preceding karmic developments to a culminating point. Think how much less karma had been accumulated in the earlier periods of earth evolution! With every incarnation fresh karma is made. At first, people had to meet under totally new conditions, with the possibility of forming fresh connections. But through repeated earth-lives we have gradually reached a point at which, as a general rule, we do not meet anyone with whom in former incarnations we have not shared this or that experience. And these experiences bring us into contact again with those who shared them. We meet other people as it would appear by chance but in reality because in former incarnations we had already

met, and on the strength of this are brought together again.

Now the self-contained consciousness soul can only develop — and its development is destined to take place in our time — when less importance is attached to what takes place at present between one person and another than to what works inwardly in solitude as the result of former incarnations. In the Graeco-Roman period two persons meeting for the first time made an impression upon each other which worked with the immediacy of a blow. At present, if a meeting is to take place that is to further the development of the consciousness soul, the moving factor between them must be what emerges in one or [the] other as the result of previous incarnations. This takes longer than recognition at first sight; it implies the gradual coming to the surface, little by little in a feeling, instinctive way, of what they formerly lived through together. What we ask today is that in becoming acquainted individual corners should be rubbed off. Because it is in the becoming acquainted, this rubbing off of corners, that the still unconscious, instinctive reminiscences and after-effects of former incarnations strike upwards. The consciousness soul can only develop when our contacts with other people are

made from within; whereas the intellectual and mind soul develops more through immediate contact.

What I have now described for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch is only in its initial stage. And as the epoch continues it will become increasingly difficult to bring ourselves into a right relationship with others, because this demands inner development, inner activity. A beginning has been made, but what has begun must continue to spread and become more and more intensive. How hard it is already in this present time for people drawn together by karma to understand each other, perhaps because owing to other karmic connections they have not the force instinctively to conjure up all the relations leading over from former incarnations. Stirred by certain after-effects of previous earth-lives, people are drawn together in love; but other forces work against these rising memories, and friends grow apart again. And this putting the durability of their relationship to the test is not only for those who meet in life as friends; it will also be increasingly difficult for children to understand their parents, parents their children, brothers and sisters each other. Reciprocal understanding will become more and more difficult, because of the increasing need to free what is

karmically imprisoned within us, and to let it rise to the surface.

Now this negative prospect of ever increasing difficulty in reciprocal understanding in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch requires of us that we should not dream our lives away in the dark, nor close our eyes to the condition of evolution, because this is an absolutely necessary condition. If the difficulty of coming to mutual understanding were not hanging over fifth post-Atlantean humanity, the consciousness soul could not develop, and people would have to live their life in common dependent upon their natural tendencies. And cultivation of individuality — which belongs to the consciousness soul — would not be able to develop either. This must take place. Men will have to undergo this test.

Nevertheless, if only this negative aspect of evolutionary conditions in the fifth post-Atlantean period were to prevail, war and strife would inevitably arise, and find their way into even our most unimportant concerns. I need refer only to one thing and it will be plain to all of us how the remedy is to be sought for one of our necessary ills — for the difficulty we find in understanding each other. I need only say — because we are living in the age of the

consciousness soul, as the fifth post-Atlantean epoch proceeds more and more conscious interest will have to be felt for SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING. In this term needs are summed up which in the fourth post-Atlantean period did not exist to at all the same extent. Anyone able accurately to study the history of ancient Greece and Rome knows that for these peoples the individual was not yet possessed of the abilities that can now be made use of by European humanity, and by their American connections. This becomes clearer if we compare human beings with an animal species. Why do animals of the same species live, within certain limits, harmoniously together? For through their group soul, the soul of their species, they have this inborn faculty; it is inherent in the species, and a matter of course. But this represents a stage of development at which the animal remains stationary, but which man must outgrow. Every single human being must develop himself as an individual, and particularly in our modern age of the consciousness soul this self-culture of the individual is one of the most important matters. The Graeco-Roman civilisation is still coloured by a group-soul element. We find its peoples making part of a social order, the structure of which, though certainly derived more from moral forces, is in itself a fixed structure and will in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch be increasingly broken up.

This group-soul element in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch has no longer any meaning for the fifth. A conscious form of social understanding must take its place, proceeding from a deep knowledge of the true being of the human individual. And it is spiritual science which will first develop this understanding. When spiritual science blossoms more and more out of the abstract into the concrete, into fullness of life, among its adherents a very special knowledge of, a very special interest in, humanity will be aroused. There will be people with special gifts for teaching others about the different temperaments and characterological tendencies, how this person with a particular temperament should be taken in such a way, whereas that other person with the same temperament but with a different trend of character requires different treatment. These specially gifted men will say to those who are ready to learn: "Look carefully; there is this type of person and there is that other type, and, with each, must deal differently." Practical psychology, practical knowledge of the soul, but also a practical knowledge of life, will be cultivated, and out of this true social understanding for human development will grow.

What have we had up to now in the shape of social understanding? All kinds of abstract ideals, concerned

with national welfare and human happiness, this or that form of socialism, have made their appearance. And only when certain sociological ideas are really on the point of being put into practice, is the acknowledgment of their impracticability forthcoming. What in the first place is important is not to found sects and societies with fixed programmes, but to spread the knowledge of men, notably such knowledge of human nature as will enable us to understand the growing, developing human being, to understand the child, and how each child develops according to its particular individuality. In this way we shall learn so to adjust ourselves in life that when confronted by karma with a personal connection to be made, a connection to be drawn closer, we shall establish a real and enduring relationship, of the kind which can prove itself in life to be most truly fruitful. Practical knowledge of man, practical, effectual interest in humanity, this is what counts. Up to the present mankind has gone only a short way along this path and with small success. For how do we judge a person whom we meet nowadays? As being agreeable to us, or the reverse. Look about you and you will find that this is, in most cases, the sole criterion, or if more than one opinion is pronounced there is only one point of view; "This man appeals to me, another does not. I like this about so-and-so, but I do not like that."

Foregone conclusions! We make for ourselves an idea of what someone should be, and when we find that they differ from it we criticise. No progress will be made towards a true practical understanding of man until we do away with these prejudices and fancies for this person or that, and make up our minds to take people as they are.

How often, when two people meet for the first time, one of them arouses instantaneous antipathy in the other, whom he dislikes so much that afterwards whatever they have to do with each other is coloured by this dislike. As a consequence the karmic connection between them can be entirely blotted out, or set on a false track, and will have to be laid aside until the two meet again in their next incarnation. Sympathy and antipathy are the greatest enemies of true social interests, though only too little heed is paid to the fact. But to anyone deeply aware of the importance of true social understanding for the further development of mankind, it is distressing to watch the effect teachers in a school often have upon their pupils, when out of prejudice they show preference for one rather than another, whereas it is important to take each of them as he is able and to make the very most of that.

But here we are up against regulations. Our regulations and social laws often so implacably wipe out individuality in the teacher himself, that any real effort to uphold individuality as such is impossible.

Understanding for spiritual science would cause practical knowledge of the human soul and practical knowledge of man to become matters of general interest. This is a necessity for social understanding if it is, to some extent, to create the opposite pole to the difficulty of understanding one another. It is what must come in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch of the consciousness soul is to develop fully. Man must go through trials and provings, for the opposing forces set snares in our way. And accordingly feelings of sympathy and antipathy will be widespread, and it is only by consciously combating these superficial feelings that we shall bring the consciousness soul safely to birth. Social understanding between man and man will also be more and more powerfully opposed by those nationalistic feelings and emotions, which only assumed their present form in the nineteenth century but are gaining the upper hand more and more. And since good is to be found only in the overcoming of them, these national antagonisms, these national sympathies and antipathies,[as they arise] are so strong that they are fearful testings for

mankind. Were they to gain the upper hand, as they bid fair to do, we should dream away the development of the consciousness soul, because nationalism works in the opposite direction, and stands in the way of man's independence by tending to make of him a mere reflection of this or that national group. This is the first thing to bear in mind if we want the otherwise empty saying to become a reality in our souls: that the fifth post-Atlantean epoch is in particular for the development of the consciousness soul. And further to this development: if as individualism increases religion does not adapt itself to the needs of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, but remains as it was suitable for the fourth post-Atlantean period, a certain drying up of the religious life must take place.

Religious groups were bound to arise in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch because at that time mankind lived more as groups. It was necessary for authority to pour out dogmas, principles of religion, religious thought, upon groups of people, as common to them all. But because the urge to develop individuality through the consciousness soul in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch is becoming stronger and stronger, that which speaks out of the group religions can no longer find its way to human hearts, and individual human souls. And what comes from these group

religions will simply not be understood. In the fourth post-Atlantean epoch it was still possible out of the group to teach people about Christ. But in the fifth period Christ is already actually entering the individual soul. Already, unconsciously or subconsciously, we all carry Christ within us. But through ourselves alone we must find the way to understand Him anew. This will not come from the imposing of fixed dogmas, only from doing all we can to further what will make Christ universally comprehensible, to further the spread of universal religious knowledge in general, and to search out everything which can work to this end. Hence in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch the need for more and more tolerance, particularly where thought in connection with religious experience is concerned. And whereas in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch those who worked to spread religious truths did so by imposing certain dogmas and fixed principles, in the fifth period this must all completely change. It is a question of something entirely different. Because men are becoming more and more individual an attempt should be made for anyone to describe his inner experiences completely freed from dogma to another, in such a way that the latter might also be able to develop his own free life of religious thought as an individual. It is a fact that dogmatic religion, the fixed

dogmas of the religious confessions, will kill the religious life of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. So that a fresh start from this age must consist in making it clear that in the first centuries of the Christian era this or that may have been adapted to man's development at the time, and that in the following centuries something different is needed. Also that there are different religions. We must try to make the essential nature of the different religions intelligible, to make clear different aspects of the Christ-conception. In this way we bring to every soul what it requires for its particular deepening. But we do not ourselves intervene in the moulding of the soul; we leave the soul, especially in the sphere of religion, its own liberty of thinking and scope to unfold this liberty.

Just as social understanding is necessary for the fifth post-Atlantean period at the point I have described, so is liberty of thought on religious grounds a fundamental condition for the development of the consciousness soul. SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE SPHERE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS. LIBERTY OF THOUGHT IN THE SPHERE OF RELIGION — of the religious life.

This effort of ours to understand the religious aspect of life more and more, to penetrate it, and by so doing

to come to terms with our fellow men even though each of them may have his own religious life to unfold, must be kept clearly in view because it is a basic need of the fifth post-Atlantean period and something humanity must acquire by consciously drawing upon their own strength. In this very age of the consciousness soul, the ahrimanic powers are most fiercely renewing their attack upon liberty of thought — the nerve and sinew in the stream of the spiritual scientific conception of life — and we know what opposition it encounters from the religious confessions in general, and what calumnies are directed from every side upon spiritual science, on account of its complete and luminous acceptance of the birth of the consciousness soul, and its refusal to take part in propagating the kind of religious life which is still dependent upon the support of the intellectual or mind soul, as in the fourth post-Atlantean period. The various forms assumed by Christianity were established in the fourth post-Atlantean period according to the requirements of the Graeco-Roman civilisation. As Church-forms they are already unsuitable and will become ever more unsuitable for the growth of free thought which must take place.

And in the age which prompted by modern life feels the first stirrings of a need to think freely, we find the

opposing power at work in the so-called Jesuitism of the different religions — although much comes under this heading which would have to be described in detail. It is actually brought to life in order that the strongest possible resistance may be offered to liberty of thought, so vital a necessity for the fifth post-Atlantean period. It will become more and more necessary to exterminate Jesuitism, the enemy in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch of free thinking, because from religion outwards liberty of thought must spread over every sphere of life. But as it must be striven for independently, mankind is put, as it were, to the proof, and difficulties spring up everywhere. These difficulties will increase as men of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch advance towards clear consciousness, yet feeling this at first to be a disadvantage, and in many respects stupefying themselves.

So we find the clash of sharp conflict between germinating liberty of thought and the principle of authority which works into our times like a hang-over from the past. And there is a passion for dulling the consciousness and for self-deception where belief in authority is concerned. In our time putting faith in authority has become so great and so intensified that under its influence people are losing their power of

judgment. In the fourth post-Atlantean epoch they were endowed by nature with sound understanding; now they must acquire it, develop it, and their belief in authority holds them back from doing so. We are becoming bound hand and foot to our belief in authority. Only think how helpless human beings appear when compared to the unreasoning animal creation! How completely the animal is guided by instincts which lead it in a sound way even from sickness back to health; whereas modern man fights against sound judgment in this respect and submits himself entirely to authority. He has very little wish to acquire discernment for healthy conditions of living, although it is true that praiseworthy efforts are made in this direction by various societies and institutions. But these efforts need to be very much intensified; above all we must realise that we have increasingly to contend with our own trust in authority, and that whole theories are being built up which in their turn will become the basis of convictions only serving to uphold belief in authority.

In medicine, in law and in every other sphere people declare themselves from the outset incompetent to judge, and accept what science tells them. The complications of modern life make this understandable. But under the pressure of authority

we shall become more and more helpless. And systematically to build up this force of authority, this habit of authority, is actually the principle of Jesuitism. And Jesuitism in the Catholic religion is only a special instance of other less noticeable performances in other directions. It begins in the sphere of ecclesiastical dogma with the tendency to uphold papal authority projected over from the fourth post-Atlantean period into the fifth where it can do no good. But the same Jesuitical principle will gradually transfer itself to other spheres of life. In a form hardly differing from the Jesuitism of dogmatic religion, we already find it in medical circles where a certain dogmatism strives after more power for the medical profession. This is typical of Jesuitical aspiration everywhere; and it will grow stronger and stronger. People will find themselves more and more tied down by what authority imposes upon them. And in face of this ahrimanic opposition — for such it is — salvation for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch will be found in asserting the rights of the consciousness soul which is wishing to develop. But as the gift of reason is no longer bestowed upon us like our two arms by Nature, as was still to some extent the case in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch, this can only come about through our good will to develop the faculties of understanding and sound judgment. The development of the

consciousness soul demands liberty of thought; and this can flourish only in a particular aura, in a certain atmosphere.

I have pointed out that the fifth post-Atlantean epoch is beset with difficulties on account of its pressing forward in a certain direction, to the development of the consciousness soul. The consciousness soul — just because it should develop as such — must encounter opposition and pass through trials. We see what tremendous and growing opposition there is to social understanding and liberty of thought. But this opposition is not acknowledged to be such; it is looked upon in the most extensive circles as right and proper, as something in no way to be condemned but on the contrary most carefully to be fostered.

There are, however, a great many people whose sincerity and clear vision make them fully aware of what dangers modern man is exposed to and who have a keen sense for what is already plain to see: that karmic connections having entered the period of crisis described above, the moment has come when parents and children, brothers and sister peoples and nations will no longer understand each other. There are already a sufficient number of people who realise

that these necessary conditions can work for good only when they are faced with the understanding which rises from the very life of the heart. For the impulse for this new world-working must be consciously wrung out of the heart's blood. What comes spontaneously brings estrangement between individuals. We must consciously strive after what springs from the human heart. Every single soul has difficulties to encounter in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch because the consciousness soul can develop only through the testing occasioned by the overcoming of these difficulties.

How often nowadays one hears: "I don't know what to do with myself, I don't know how to organise my life." This comes from inability to see clearly what the needs of the present time are, and what man's position is with regard to them. Many people are reduced by existing conditions to physical illness, physical strain and loss of balance. And a real understanding for this must be more and more intensively cultivated because what threatens us, and is at the same time a necessity for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, is the danger of DESTITUTION OF SOUL — destitution of the particular "shade" described in today's lecture. Many people see what this means and feel how necessary it is that we should

come to social understanding on the one hand and liberty of thought on the other. But today very few are inclined to make use of the right means to this end. For social understanding, what would be necessary to achieve it, is only too often served by a hotch-potch [hodge-podge? — e.Ed] of high-sounding phrases. There is a lot of talk nowadays about the necessity for the individual treatment of the growing child. What long-winded theories are devised in every branch of pedagogy! Very little of this is to the point. Whereas an intelligent circulation of as many positive descriptions as possible of how the human being actually develops, a positive natural history of individual development, is needed. Wherever possible we should describe how the human beings A, B and C have developed and enter lovingly into such human development as takes place before our eyes — this is what we need. Above all the study of life is necessary, the will to gain knowledge of life itself, rather than to make out programmes. The theoretical programme is the enemy of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch of culture.

Now when a society is formed, this should take place in accordance with the aims of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. This means that the members of it must constitute the chief reason for its existence, and the exchange of ideas between these actual men should

yield the best results possible; and if sufficient attention is given to this, very individual results will show themselves. At present, what is the usual procedure? It begins with a drawing up of rules. This can be quite good, and may be necessary, because external conditions demand rules and regulations. But on our own ground we must be very clear that talk about programmes and regulations is merely a concession to the outside world; that what concerns us must be the life in common as individuals, what issues from actual human beings; that reciprocal understanding is what counts. This will make it possible even in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch — which has centuries yet before it — that from among those who understand such things, understanding could go forth for vital individual development in the world generally, which at present puts everything into sections and regulations as if into a straight jacket. From thence come the high-sounding doctrines which from pulpit and platform proclaim the art of living. Theories crop up on every hand, dripping with abstractions and demonstrating every imaginable idea and ideal. So importance can be attached to them, but only to what is concrete, and to a comprehending penetration of the actualities of life. How can this come about?

It stands to reason that to what has been said the following objections would be justified: “Yes, indeed — but we are not qualified to pronounce an opinion upon what experts nowadays officially give out. Only consider” — it might be objected — “what the medical student has to learn! That he should learn it is right and proper, but we could not; and then add to this what the lawyer must know, and the art student, and so on.” — It is certainly out of the question that we should learn these things; but we are not called upon to be creative, we need only be capable of judging. We must allow the expert to create, but we must be able to criticise the expert. And this faculty of judgment we shall not acquire by specialising, but only by cultivating in an all-round way our powers of understanding and our faculty of judgment. This, however, can never come about through expert knowledge in some particular branch of science, but only through the all-embracing knowledge of the Spirit.

Spiritual science must be the centre around which all the sciences revolve; for it not only throws light upon the connections in human evolution, but the way of thinking peculiar to it develops in us sound understanding, and this must be produced and given out from far deeper depths than during the Graeco-

Roman civilisation of the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. The construction of concepts and representations necessary for spiritual science, and peculiar to it, does not qualify us to become experts in any particular sphere, but it gives us the power of judging. And the reason for this will become more and more plain to see. There are mysterious forces in the human soul, and these forces, these mystery forces, will link the human soul with the spiritual world, and through our participation in spiritual science this link will enable us to use our judgment when we stand in the presence of authority. We shall not have expert knowledge but when in certain cases the expert acts on the strength of what he knows, we shall be able to form our own judgment about it.

Emphasis must be laid upon the fact that spiritual science not only teaches us but in this connection develops our faculty of judgment — that is to say, it makes possible and fosters the freedom and independence of our thinking. Spiritual science may not qualify us to enter the medical profession, but if we can penetrate to its reality it makes us capable of forming a right judgment upon the results of medicine in public life. If what I mean by this could once be fully understood, there would be understanding as well for the many, many life-giving forces of the fifth post-

Atlantean epoch. For very much is contained in what I mean by saying that spiritual science will, as it were, remodel the human Intellect in such a way that man's critical faculty may be able to unfold itself, and in releasing his intellectual life from the life of his soul he may be able to develop true liberty of thought.

I should like now, if you will allow me, to put these thoughts before you in a more pictorial, imaginative way» We are told in spiritual science of a concrete spiritual world; of elemental beings surrounding us; of the Hierarchies, Angels, Archangels and so forth. The world becomes peopled for us with real spiritual content, spiritual forces and spiritual beings. That we should know nothing about these spiritual beings is no longer a matter of indifference to them as to some extent it still was in the fourth post-Atlantean period. But if in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch men on earth know nothing about them it is as though, a part of their spiritual nourishment was being withheld. The spiritual world is in close communication with our present physical world of earth. You will understand this better when I tell you something which may seem strange now, but is quite simply true; and although at present it is still not possible to say very much, yet certain truths must be given out because humanity should no longer be without them.

From the point of view of humanity on earth we are perfectly justified in saying: With the Mystery of Golgotha Christ entered earth-life, and He has remained in earth-life since then; and from this point of view we can feel it as good fortune for earth-life that Christ should have entered it. But now let us consider this from the standpoint of the Angels — which is no invention of mine, but follows as a reality from occult investigation — let us transfer ourselves to the standpoint of the Angels. Their experience in the spiritual sphere was quite different, it was the reverse of ours. Christ left the sphere of the Angels to come to mankind; He forsook their world. Speaking for themselves they could say: Christ left our world to go through the Mystery of Golgotha. And they would have as much reason to sorrow over this as we have to rejoice that Christ in His healing power should have come to us in as far as we live on earth in our physical bodies. This is a real train of thought, and anyone with actual knowledge of the spiritual world knows that there is only one way for the Angels to find solace, and I described it rightly when I said that men on earth in their physical bodies should live with the Christ-thought in such a way that it can shine upwards as a light to the Angels — since the Mystery of Golgotha — shine up to the Angels as a light. Men say: Christ has entered into us, and we can develop in such a way

that He will be able to dwell in us — “not I, but Christ in me.” The Angels say: Christ has gone from the sphere of our inner life, and He shines up to us now like so many stars in the Christ-thought of individual men; He shines up to us since the Mystery of Golgotha, and there we find Him again. There is a real connection between the spiritual world and the human world. And this is also shown by the fact that the spiritual beings who apart from ourselves inhabit the spiritual world look with satisfaction and approval upon our thoughts about their world. They can help us only if we think about them; and although we may not have attained to clairvoyant vision into the spiritual world, if we know about these spiritual beings they can help us. In return for our study of spiritual science help comes to us from the spiritual world. It is not merely the things we learn, the knowledge we acquire, it is the beings of the higher Hierarchies themselves who help us when we know about them. And if in future, as the fifth post-Atlantean epoch proceeds, we face the authority of the expert, it will be good to have behind us not only our own human understanding but also what the spiritual beings are able to weave into it through our knowing about them. They qualify us to confront authority with sound judgment. The spiritual world helps us. We have need of it, we must know about it, and unite ourselves with it through conscious

understanding. This is the third thing which must come to pass in the fifth post-Atlantean period.

The RECIPROCAL UNDERSTANDING IN
first is: SOCIAL LIFE.

The THE ACQUIRING OF FREEDOM OF
second: THOUGHT.

The LIVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPIRITUAL
third: WORLDS THROUGH SPIRITUAL SCIENCE.

These three things must be the great true ideals of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. We must have reciprocal understanding in the social sphere, liberty of thought in religion and in the other branches of community life; and in the sphere of knowledge we must have knowledge of the spiritual worlds.

SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING, LIBERTY OF THOUGHT, KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLDS. These are the three great aims and impulses of the fifth post-Atlantean period. In the light of these impulses we must develop, for they are the true lights of our time. Many people feel strongly that some change is necessary, particularly in the social sphere where a

quite different way of living must be adopted, and that we must have different concepts. But out of ignorance or unwillingness they evade the ultimate conclusions. This can be seen from the attitude of so many towards the aspirations of spiritual science. And here we need not confine ourselves to deliberately malicious calumny of it or of Theosophy. We need only consider the sincere will that abounds among men today, sincere will that aims at the creation of impulses tending in the direction post-Atlantean humanity should take.

Only think how many reformers there are in every sphere, pastors and preachers on social matters; preachers too who do not belong to theological or religious circles. How they all take the floor! And often prompted by the best will possible. How is that to lead humanity in the direction towards which modern life is striving today? Good intentions are to be found everywhere, so let us for the moment consider what comes, not from bad intentions, but from good. And yet these good intentions do not help so long as they consist only in vague talk, however warm the feelings which underlie it; because the three great true ideals of human understanding, liberty of thought and knowledge of the spiritual worlds cannot reach fulfilment unless the knowledge which comes only

from spiritual science is quickened into life. At present, however, except for the little company rallied round the spiritual-scientific conception of the world, understanding for such things has not yet reached even its initial stage.

But we come nowadays upon fine and lofty theories tending in this direction. And, as an example, I should like to tell you of something which happened — “by chance”, as we say — to myself. Actually it came about through karma that looking one day into a shop window my eye was caught by the title of a little book which I bought. The subject of it is modern man, what he is in search of, under what impressions he grows up; it describes the many advantages of modern times which make life easy and comfortable — the convenience of steam and electricity, and so on — all set forth in detail. Emphasis is laid upon the jostle and rush of modern life, but also upon its increased possibilities; allusion is made to the outstanding discoveries and inventions of our time in comparison with the duller, poorer, more instinctive way of living in former times — all this is described with a kind of fervour and delight. But then follows a description of the difficulties of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, which I have pointed out today, only without any indication that these things proceed from the peculiarities of the

age itself and its demand that the consciousness soul should be developed. What stands out is a complete lack of clear vision, in spite of an open compassionate heart. I will quote: "It is strange that a description of our modern civilisation, which begins on a high note of joy in existence, must end upon the deep note of inner destitution of soul. What we experience here in a small way" (he means by 'a small way' the place where he lives) "is in a far greater sense the experience of our age. An abundance of culture beyond compare, a display of beauty and power in life scarcely to be equaled in history, and side by side with it all a spiritual destitution mounting upwards to lay hold on every class."

And now, having given evidence of so much perspicacity, the author goes on to review various possibilities whereby the true impulse in modern humanity may find its right outlet. And among these possibilities, Theosophy, as he sees it, comes into consideration. Here, among its many enemies, we find a well-wisher of Theosophy, someone who with all good-will takes the trouble to interest himself in it and for this reason claims our attention. Indeed it is not without good reason that I bring these things to your notice; it is essential that we should concern ourselves

with what are the positive connections of spiritual science with the outside world.

After passing “pseudo mysticism” in review as a means of deepening life and as a remedy for destitution of soul, the writer goes on to say; “Theosophy is a near neighbour to mysticism. Many people see it only as a substitute for more trustworthy forces, or as a tendency to syncretism or to eclecticism” — that is to say a hotch-potch [hodge-podge, again — e.Ed] of religious confessions and world-conceptions, just as people who do not wish to go into spiritual science call it warmed-up gnosticism and so on. But the author of this book goes a step further, for he says; “Those who see it only as a tendency to syncretism and eclecticism, equivalent to individual inclinations, confuse it with still more doubtful symptoms of modern life such as superstition, spiritualism, apparitions, symbolism and similar trifling with the mystery-loving element in human nature. But this is not the case. We do this Movement an injustice by refusing to acknowledge its deep inner connections and values,” — Thus we stand indeed in the presence of a well-wisher. — He continues: “Where Steiner’s circle at least is concerned, we must try to understand it as a contemporary religious Movement, although perhaps

more syncretic than original, but going to the roots of all life.” Let us hope that as this man shows so much goodwill, he may yet find his way to the “originality” of our Movement. “We may look upon it as a Movement dedicated to the satisfying of man’s super-sensible interests, and therefore as having outgrown the realism attached to the senses. Above all we may recognise it as a Movement which exhorts men to consider their moral problems, to work for inner rebirth through scrupulous concentration upon self-education.” As I have already said; I am not reading this to you out of silly sentimentality, but considering the many things said from other points of view about Anthroposophy, it seems not irrelevant that we should make ourselves acquainted with a criticism such as this: — “One has only to read Steiner’s book on Theosophy to be struck by the earnestness with which he enjoins upon his readers the necessity for purification and self-improvement. The speculations contained in it upon the super-sensible are in themselves a reaction to materialism; of course” — and now comes something to which I must beg that you will pay particular attention — “here the book loses touch with reality, and soars into the realms of hypothesis and clairvoyant fantasy, into a world of dreams in which there is no place for the realities of individual and social life. Nevertheless theosophy

must be registered as a corrective phenomenon in the cultural progress of our time.”

And so there is just one thing to which the author of this book takes exception, and that is the ascent, to knowledge of the spirit, to concrete knowledge of the spirit; which means that he would be glad of the impulse towards man’s moral improvement which, by his own showing, springs from Theosophy, but he does not yet understand that for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch moral improvement can only come about through concrete spiritual knowledge. He cannot perceive the roots, and he wants the fruits without them. His range of vision cannot embrace the whole connection. And he is so extraordinarily interesting for just this reason: that, as we see, he has given deep thought to the study of my book “Theosophy” and yet cannot understand that the one is impossible without the other. He would like to cut off the book’s head and keep its body because the latter he feels to be important.

This bears out what I have been saying that such people acknowledge the need for social understanding and liberty of thought — this they understand; but that the third, namely, knowledge of the spirit, must form the basis of our fifth post-Atlantean epoch they

are not willing to admit; it is something they cannot rise to. And one of the most important tasks in the world-conception of spiritual science is to arouse understanding for this. People often say that rising to the spiritual worlds is a fantastic illusion. They do not see that it is the loss of this knowledge which has brought materialism upon us, with the incapacity for social understanding to which it is allied, with the materialistic way of living, and attitude towards life. And it is by studying our well-wishers that we can realise how difficult it is for people to admit the existence of concrete spiritual worlds. Because of this we must try the harder to gain understanding for such impulses as those I have brought forward today in my lecture.

The title of the little book I mentioned is “Die Gedankenwelt des Gebildeten, Probleme und Aufgaben” by Prof. Dr. Friedrich Mahling, published in Hamburg in 1914, and it is the reprint of a lecture given by Dr. Mahling at Hamburg on the 23rd September 1913, during the 37th Congress for the Inner Mission. I am only surprised that no one in our circle has ever mentioned the book, for since its publication in 1914 it might easily have come under the notice of any one of us. And although it is important to concern ourselves with the various

crossing and re-crossing threads between different spheres of thought at this present time, and with the various shades of abuse and mockery by which our Movement is attacked, we ought also to interest ourselves when, for once in a way as in this case, we are met by an honest effort to understand, and when we could learn from it something about the difficulties such an effort encounters.

The purpose of this lecture has been to point out what should be the three great concrete Ideals of our fifth post-Atlantean epoch; reciprocal understanding in social life, liberty of thought, knowledge of the Spirit. In the future it will be for these three great ideals to direct the sciences. It will be for them to refine and purify life, to inspire morality with fresh impulses, to direct, penetrate and further the life of modern humanity to the greatest extent possible. But the first two demands, social understanding and liberty of thought, cannot be satisfied unless the third, knowledge of the Spirit, is added to them, because the consciousness soul should be developed. And the highest stage of the consciousness soul is the spirit-self, the natural predisposition for which will appear in the sixth post-Atlantean epoch. But it cannot develop without the preparatory stage of inner self-dependence, only to be attained by man through the

unfolding of the consciousness soul. And we must remind ourselves as part of our endeavour in spiritual science that what may seem to us abstract truths have in them magic power which has only to be released for clear light to pour over the whole of life. And wherever we are placed, as scientists or practical workers in whatever sphere, however small our part, if we know how to quicken into life, for whatever that sphere may be, the abstract truths we take in during our meetings, we shall be fellow-workers at the greatest tasks of our time. And our souls will then be filled with a gladness which is not superficial good cheer, but has its part in the life-giving seriousness that increases our strength; and instead of allowing life to degenerate into a mere excuse for enjoyment makes of us true workers in life.

In this sense the three great concrete social ideals and ideals of cognition will enable the consciousness soul in the fifth post-Atlantean period to understand the Mystery of Golgotha, and to receive Christ in a new way. For we forge a real link with the spiritual worlds by learning to know how these worlds also stand to the central impulse of earth evolution, to the Christ impulse. The Christ impulse will become our real link with the spiritual worlds under the influence of the thoughts which stream from them earthwards, and which we offer up again in our thinking about

Christ; because in earth existence since the Mystery of Golgotha the thoughts of human souls shine upwards consolingly like bright stars, as I have described, even to the world of the angels who lost Christ from their sphere in order that they might find Him again shining up to them from the sphere of human thinking.

No, knowledge of the Spirit may not be described as fantastic. It is knowledge of the Spirit which first, of all endeavours to find a way of influencing the actual conditions under which destitution of soul, necessarily bound up with the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, arises. It is of these things that I wished to speak to you today. Let us hope that we may meet again here at a not too distant date, and that until then we may be united in thought and continue to work in the spirit of our Movement.